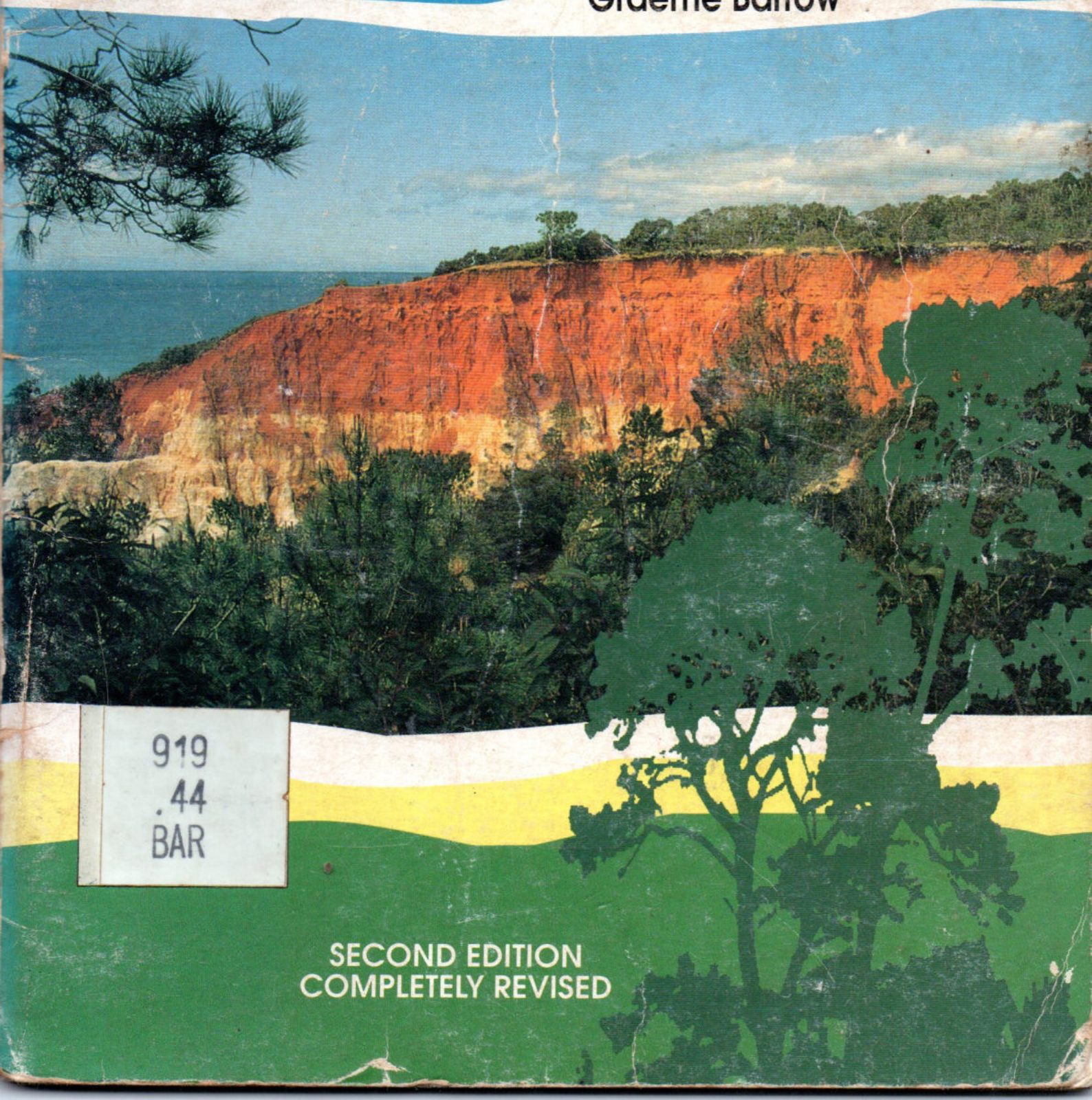
Walking the South Coast

Tracks from Nowra to Eden

Graeme Barrow



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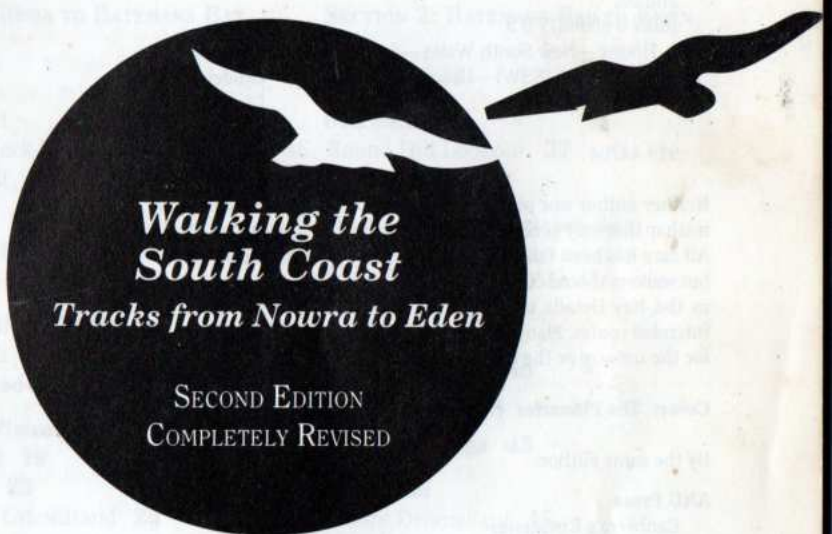

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Tracks from Nowra to Eden

SECOND EDITION
COMPLETELY REVISED

Graeme Barrow

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Neither author nor publisher will accept responsibility for any mishap that may occur to any walker using the tracks described. All care has been taken in the compilation of the descriptions, but walkers should check first with the various authorities noted in the Key Details to ensure no changes have been made to intended routes. Many of the places described can be dangerous for the unwary or the careless.

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Introduction

If there is a paradise for walkers then it may well be found on the south coast of New South Wales. The narrow strip of land running from Nowra in the north to beyond Eden in the far south contains a rich array of environments ranging from rainforest gullies to island beaches. There are mountains to climb and flat stretches on which Aboriginal hunters and gatherers obtained food over tens of thousands of years. Except for some man-made structures there is little that is ugly on the south coast. The physical beauty of the place is of such quality that even after repeated visits over twenty years I am never reluctant to return. Indeed, it seems that on each visit I am rewarded by discovering another track to explore, leading inevitably to some new vista or other natural phenomenon to admire.

Many of the trails described in this book have historical connections, whether with the first inhabitants who alas did not produce written records or with the British explorers and developers, the forerunners of the human flood that has swept over the coast and left its mark, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. Development continues, together with the antagonism it inevitably creates, but as this book is about walking for pleasure I do not intend to enter that frenzied debate. Suffice to say that the system of national parks and reserves along the coast must be fostered and loved, if only because, luckily or by design, they act as a buffer against the predatory actions of those who regard land as real estate and timber as pulp. Yet how sad it is to see the park authorities so strapped for cash when so much more could be done to ensure the integrity of these places and that future users derive as much enjoyment from them as we do today.

I published the first edition of this book in 1986. This second edition follows the same course as the first although readers of both will notice substantial changes. Many of the walks that appeared in the first edition do not find a place here because on the whole I consider their replacements are better, more interesting walks. I have split the book into two sections, north and south of Batemans Bay—a convenient halfway point—and introduced several maps. I have kept these to a minimum because I believe many of these signposted tracks do not warrant individual maps—those quoted in the Key Details

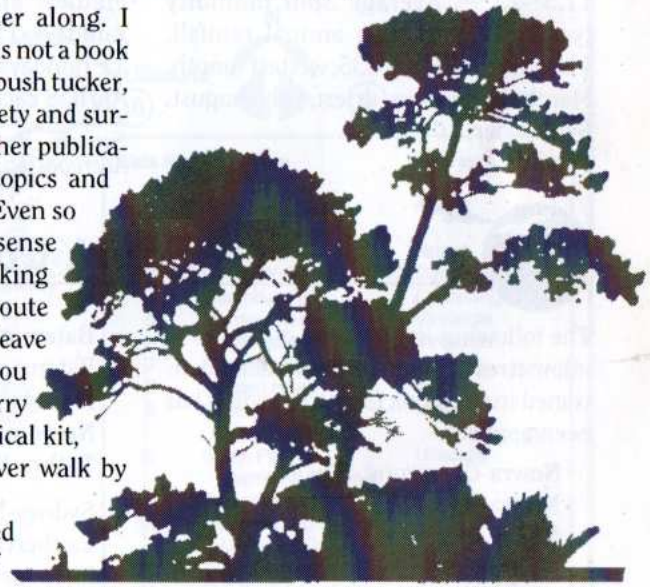
are from the Central Mapping Authority's 1:25 000 series. Given my frustration when in strange places in finding my way to starting points, I have made this part of the Key Details more precise and detailed than in the first edition. As usual, rounding has been applied to heights, distances and walking times. Finally, colour illustrations have been introduced.

This is a book about walking, sometimes on tracks, sometimes on the beach, sometimes on roads, and what you can see as you wander along. I should make it plain that it is not a book about bushcraft, bush gear, bush tucker, camping techniques, or safety and survival in the bush—many other publications deal with all these topics and others of a similar nature. Even so there are a few commonsense safety rules, even with walking for pleasure: check your route first with the authorities; leave written notes about where you are going; be well shod; carry food and water; take a medical kit, map and compass; and never walk by yourself.

Many people have assisted me in the production of *Walking the South Coast* by answering questions and supplying other information; readers of the manuscript corrected errors or made suggestions and I was glad of their advice even if I did not always take it. I extend my general thanks to them all.

All the walks described in this book were researched in the autumn, winter and spring of 1992.

Graeme Barrow
Canberra 1993.



South Coast Weather

The following yearly figures indicate the weather that walkers may experience at selected localities on the NSW south coast. The mid winter and mid summer months of July and January have been selected for showing the range of mean daily minimum and maximum temperatures at these places.

Nowra: Mean daily minimum/maximum temperatures, July, 6.0°-15.8°; January, 15.9°-25.9°. Average 3pm humidity (year), 56%. Median annual rainfall, 1141 mm; raindays, 130; wettest months, January, October, November, 13 raindays each; driest, July, 8.

Jervis Bay (Point Perpendicular): Mean daily minimum/maximum temperatures, July, 9.0°-15.2°; January, 17.5°-23.9°. Average 3pm humidity (year), 67%. Median annual rainfall, 1160 mm; raindays, 135; wettest month, March, 13 raindays; driest, July, August, September, 10 each.

Moruya (Moruya Heads): Mean daily minimum/maximum temperatures, July, 5.7°-16.0°; January, 15.9°-23.5°. Average 3pm humidity (year), 66%. Median annual rainfall, 894 mm; raindays, 108; wettest month, December, 11 raindays; driest, July, August, 7 each.

Narooma: Mean daily minimum/maximum temperatures, July, 6.0°-15.7°; January, 15.6°-23.4°. Humidity, no figures available. Median annual rainfall, 842 mm; raindays, 105; wettest month, October, 11 raindays; driest, July, 6.

Green Cape (Lighthouse): Mean daily minimum/maximum temperatures, July, 8.3°-14.3°; January, 16.1°-21.5°. Average 3pm humidity (year), 79%. Median annual rainfall, 742 mm; raindays, 114; wettest month, October, 11 raindays; driest, January, February, April, 8 each.

Source: Bureau of Meteorology, *Climatic Averages Australia*, AGPS, Canberra, 1988.

South Coast Distances

The following indicate the distances in kilometres between various places mentioned in this book (some rounding has been applied).

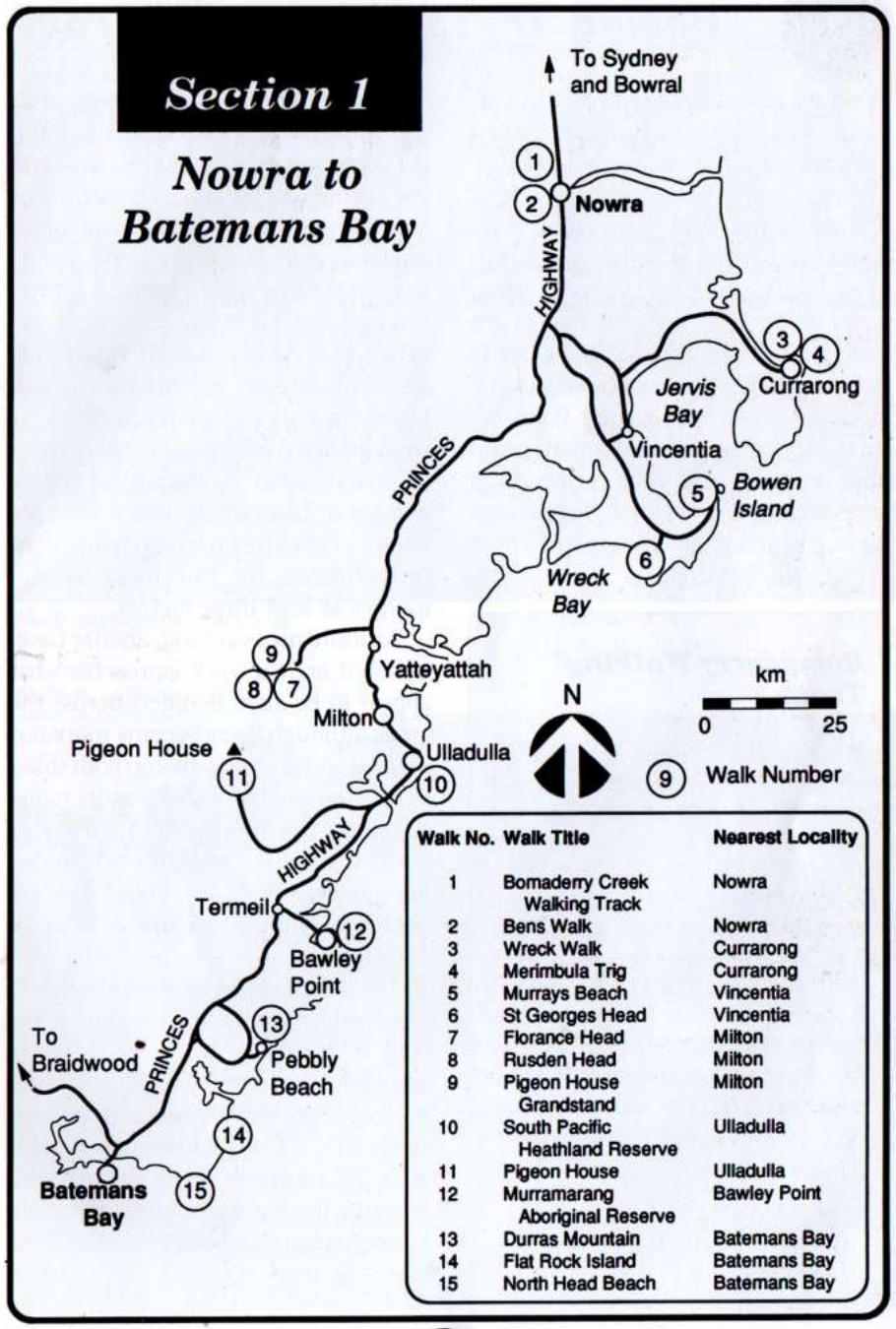
Nowra-Currarong, 30;
Nowra-Jervis Bay, 35;
Nowra-Milton, 62;
Nowra-Ulladulla, 70.
Ulladulla-Bawley Point, 25;
Ulladulla-Batemans Bay, 52.
Batemans Bay-Broulee, 20;
Batemans Bay-Moruya, 28.
Moruya-Narooma, 42.
Narooma-Tathra, 75.
Tathra-Eden, 50.

Sydney-Nowra, 165.
Canberra-Batemans Bay, 145.
Melbourne-Eden, 560.

Source: National Roads and Motorists' Association.

Section 1

Nowra to Batemans Bay



Walk No.	Walk Title	Nearest Locality
1	Bomaderry Creek Walking Track	Nowra
2	Bens Walk	Nowra
3	Wreck Walk	Currarong
4	Merimbula Trig	Currarong
5	Murrays Beach	Vincentia
6	St Georges Head	Vincentia
7	Florance Head	Milton
8	Rusden Head	Milton
9	Pigeon House Grandstand	Milton
10	South Pacific Heathland Reserve	Ulladulla
11	Pigeon House	Ulladulla
12	Murramarang Aboriginal Reserve	Bawley Point
13	Durras Mountain	Batemans Bay
14	Flat Rock Island	Batemans Bay
15	North Head Beach	Batemans Bay

1 Bomaderry Creek Walking Track

Some may consider the start of this walk intimidating because rain can make a rock crossing of Bomaderry Creek hazardous. Luckily it was fine the day I took the "western walk" from the Weir Trackhead carpark (once a quarry), crossing the creek via the rocks below water streaming down the face of the weir, built in 1938 to supply water to Bomaderry. The trail runs beneath sandstone ledges before leaving these behind. Stone steps take you up onto clifftops before the track carries on to cross Slippery Creek at Hanging Swamp, a place which is not always sodden, as on my visit, but dry.

Bomaderry Walking Track

KEY DETAILS

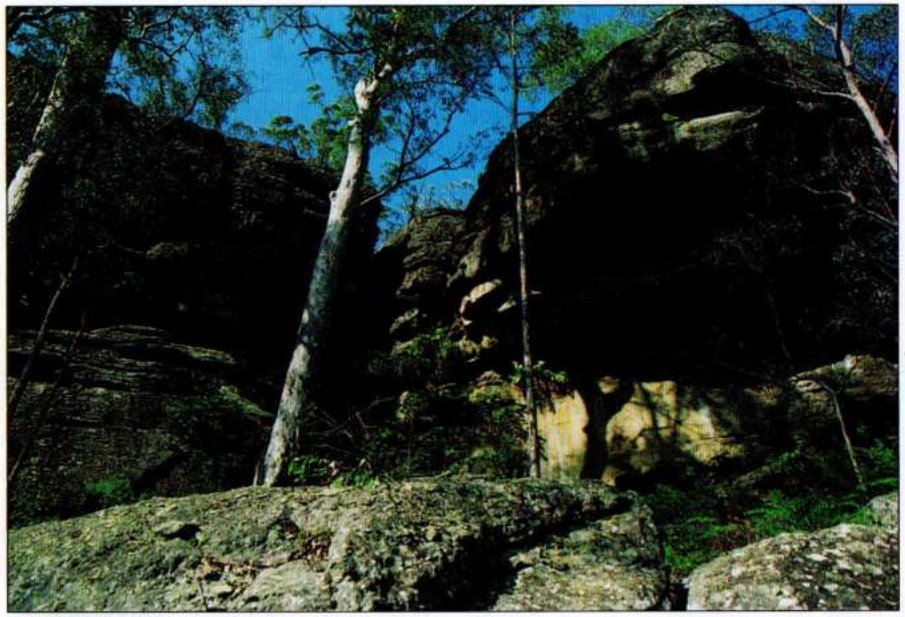
What to see: Rainforest, sandstone cliffs, scenic views. **How to get there:** From Nowra Post Office, cnr Junction/Berry Sts, drive north on Berry St and Bridge Rd, turning left onto Princes Highway. Continue on highway to roundabout, turning left into Narang St. The seal becomes a dirt road leading to Weir Trackhead and start of walk. **Total distance from Nowra PO:** 3.9 km. **Walking distance:** 5.4 km (return). **Time:** 1 hr 30 min. (return). **Category:** Easy to moderately hard. **Maps:** Berry 9028-111-N, Nowra 9028-111-S. **Further information:** Department of Conservation and Land Management, 64 North St, Nowra 2541. Ph.: 044 23 0122.

Fifteen minutes after starting out I had reached The Lookout, a spot affording views across Bomaderry Creek to the Cambewarra Range, source of the creek. The track descends closer to this waterway and, turning right at a sign pointing to She Oak Crossing, wanders through bush fringing the creek and below sandstone cliffs. Bernies Bend, apparently being replanted with rainforest species by schoolchildren, is rounded and the track edges below more cliffs and closer to the creek. Debris wedged in trees about here proves the height of the stream when in flood. On this evidence, the trail must be submerged at least three metres.

An immense overhang, Shelter Cave, is passed, and the track approaches what appear to be giant boulders across the creek although these become more numerous and precipice-like on both sides. Fern Glen, cool and shady as its name suggests, and possessing a variety of ferns, is traversed and the trail continues under more cliffs before ladders enable a boulder obstruction to be scaled.

The track passes below another overhang with a Clinging Tree sign referring to a spotted gum (*Eucalyptus maculata*) whose growing bough found the rock an immovable obstacle and now appears locked to it. Shortly afterwards, after I had been walking for forty-five minutes, I arrived at She Oak Crossing where wooden footbridges take walkers over the creek. Cicadas drummed in

Continued, page 10



Rock formations (Walk 1)

Built to withstand floods (Walk 2)

thick forest. A steep climb followed before the trail became undulating and reached a lookout where I found myself perched above placid Bomaderry Creek and a cleared valley. Directly opposite, across the ravine, North Nowra houses poked through the greenery and looked perilously close to the cliff-line. Distance from the start was 3 km.

This is where you should begin to return because from here the trail becomes dull as it proceeds to a trackhead in wasteland at the end of Mattes Way. Once back near the She Oak Crossing, turn right and uphill at a sign pointing to Rock Crossing. The trail switchbacks through layered rocks and beneath massive overhangs. It is easy to lose one's way here and generally it is better to stick close to the cliff and rock face. More signs would be helpful, especially for strangers.

I found on my first visit that vandals had turned one sign to point in the wrong direction while the "bushwalking" symbol had been removed from some marker posts.

Rock Fall Canyon, littered with boulders, is passed, and the track sidles below the Great Wall, a smooth-sided, almost vertical hunk of rock. The trail goes on through a bewitching green forest although rocks and cliffs quickly return. Noticeable about here is the extent of lichen and moss on stone surfaces. Next, about forty minutes after beginning to retrace your steps, find that a sign on rock next to a handrail points uphill to Weir Trackhead where a route across a sandstone plateau returns you to the carpark. This return walk is about 600 metres shorter than the outward journey. As with Bens Walk (see Walk 2), the NSW Department of Lands has published an excellent brochure about the Bomaderry Creek Walking Track. It explains points of interest along the way and lists plant and animal life. Vegetation ranges from the tall, spotted gum to sundews (*Stylidium* sp.), or small perennial herbs. Birds that can be heard or seen along the trail include the grey thrush, golden whistler and satin bowerbird.

2 Bens Walk

The indolent or those pressed for time could chop 2.6 km off this walk by starting it at Hanging Rock Lookout, further up and beyond Scenic Dr. in a public reserve. I find it more relaxing to complete the whole walk by beginning at the designated start point upstream of the Shoalhaven River Bridge. Stroll up Scenic Dr. along the southern bank of the Shoalhaven and find that for some curious reason the walk detours into Paringa Park ("Paringa" is said to be Aboriginal for "pleasant waters") and then immediately climbs out again to continue along the road past the district hospital and on to Hanging Rock Lookout, 1.3 km from the start. From the road and at the lookout you get

Bens Walk

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Sandstone cliffs, river environment, suspension bridge, scenic views. **How to get there:** Drive north on Berry St and Bridge Rd from Nowra Post Office, cnr Junction/Berry Sts, turning left off Bridge Rd at Scenic Dr. to find start point opposite swimming pool. **Total distance from Nowra PO:** 1.1 km. **Walking distance:** 5.5 km (return). **Time:** 2 hr (return). **Category:** Easy. **Maps:** Berry 9028-111-N, Nowra 9028-111-S. **Further information:** Department of Conservation and Land Management, 64 North St, Nowra 2541. Ph.: 044 23 0122.

panoramic views of the spreading Shoalhaven which at Nowra is nearing the end of its marathon journey from its headwaters in the Great Dividing Range south of Braidwood. Across the river golfers hack about a course which used to be a dairy farm.

Signs point to where the track leaves Hanging Rock which juts out forty-six metres above the river. The trail cuts through a narrow passageway between rocks and twists its way down to the Shoalhaven past the Hanging Rock overhang and below a jumble of sandstone cliffs sculpted into weird shapes by wind and water over the centuries. It meets Nowra Creek and continues through dense vegetation to reach a suspension bridge across the creek. This bridge is the third to have been erected at this site, the first, built in the 1890s, having been the first such bridge constructed in NSW. Years ago, more than thirty farmers along the Shoalhaven upstream of Nowra Creek used to bring stock and produce to a wharf at Depot Farm (over the bridge) for shipping to Sydney. The bridge also allowed farmers and schoolchildren to get to Nowra.

Walk across the bridge and find the track runs along the edge of the creek to reach the Depot Farm Reserve picnic area. Stroll upstream past a small jetty to where boulders, some cemented into place, allow you to cross the creek once again and return down its eastern bank past swimming holes to the suspension bridge. From here, a short climb brings you back to the Hanging Rock Lookout.

Bens Walk commemorates a Nowra businessman, Ben Walsh, who during the 1930s depression obtained a grant that enabled itinerants living in caves above the Shoalhaven to be employed in fashioning a walking track, part of which is retraced by the present trail. Ben was the son of a botanist and is said to have "appreciated the beauty and variety of the Australian bush and encouraged others to enjoy it as well". It is fitting therefore that the track bearing his name should pass through a distinctive riverine environment which is habitat to many birds including silver gulls, crested terns, cormorants, rock warblers, honeyeaters, parrots and cockatoos. Aboriginals lived in caves about here before white settlement.

Rusting hulk pushed higher on rock (Walk 3)

Spectacular cliff face (Walk 5)

3 Wreck Walk

These days little remains of the SS *Merimbula* at Currarong, about 35 km south-east of Nowra, except for some corroding steel and a few wooden planks fastened together. The ship grounded on Whale Point on 27 March 1928 at 1 am, but luckily the fourteen pasengers and thirty-five crew all survived. At dawn, lifeboats ferried the passengers to a nearby beach at Abrahams Bosom Reserve, where this short walk to the wreck site begins.

Cross Abrahams Bosom Creek by way of a footbridge and find the track proceeds to a junction with Marions Way and Coomies Walk, both of which would eventually lead you to Merimbula Trig (see Walk 4). Ignore these trails and carry on to a point where your track turns left and heads down to an Aboriginal midden walkway. What is left of the ship can be seen on the shelving rock of Whale Point and can be reached on foot. The wreck is actually forty metres higher on the shelf than where the *Merimbula* first grounded, having been shoved up by the sea.

The *Merimbula* was a "high class passenger vessel" built in 1909 at Troon in Scotland. It had ninety-six saloons and ten second-class cabins and plied between Sydney and Eden with charter sailings between Melbourne and Tasmania. A Court of Inquiry could not explain why it grounded. Certainly the night was wet and visibility poor. The wreck was auctioned six days after the catastrophe and sold to a Melbourne resident. Most of the vessel's cargo and fittings were salvaged, but her loss marked the end of steam passenger services on the NSW south coast.

A brochure on walks in the Abrahams Bosom Reserve says that use of this comforting name (an ancient description of paradise derived from the Old Testament) survives from the days when the first sailing ships travelled the east coast and found shelter from storms in the calmer waters of Beecroft Headland. For thousands of years before this, Aboriginals had occupied the headland and eaten marine molluscs, fish and local fauna where the walkway passes over the midden, or Aboriginal kitchen. Near here the loss of the *Merimbula* is recorded on a commemorative plaque

Wreck Walk

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Steamship grounding site and wreck, Aboriginal middens. **How to get there:** Drive east from Currarong Post Office agency in Piscator Ave, turning left into Weber Ave and Beecroft Pde and continuing on to Abrahams Bosom Reserve carpark where walk begins. **Total distance from Currarong PO agency:** 0.8 km. **Walking distance:** 2.5 km (return). **Time:** 40 min. (return). **Category:** Easy. **Map:** Currarong 9027-1-N. **Further information:** Department of Conservation and Land Management, 64 North St, Nowra 2541. Ph.: 044 23 0122.

unveiled by Mrs Bessie Manning (84),of Arncliffe, a passenger on the stranded vessel.

It is possible to lengthen this walk on the way back by continuing down to Honeysuckle Point at the spot where the outward track veers left down to Whale Point. This diversion continues on to Marions Way and rejoins the Wreck Walk track at the junction of the three trails mentioned above. Marions Way is named after Marion James, a schoolteacher who taught students about the Aboriginals of this locality. She was caught up in a transport disaster herself, but unlike the *Merimbula* passengers did not survive a New Guinea air crash in 1985.

4 Merimbula Trig

Unforgettable views of Beecroft Headland cliffs make this walk a distinguished one among many outstanding trails on the NSW south coast. As with the Wreck Walk (see Walk 3), it begins at the footbridge over Abrahams Bosom Creek, but soon leaves this path at the Marion Way/Coomies Walk/Wreck Walk junction. I set off along Marions Way which runs through coastal scrub. The day was sunny and balmy with a soft breeze. A Honeysuckle Point/Mermaids Inlet junction was reached and I turned right to follow the inlet track. Lobster Bay shone in the rising sun and within minutes I was passing a sign pointing to this bay, followed soon after by another offshoot to Mermaids Inlet with Coomies Walk to Merimbula Trig beckoning on the right.

The 2 km walk to here is along a flat sandy track, but this becomes stony and moves uphill through conglomerate and ubiquitous black boys. Beecroft Headland is reached and a side track of about 250 metres brings you to a cliff-edge Lookdown above rock platforms against which waves slosh and whoosh. Occasional slabs of rock have split and tumbled from the cliffs to come to rest on shelves above the tireless waters. A motionless sea eagle waited for prey while rock fishermen and others in a dinghy out to sea were just as patient. The NSW south coast offers countless memorable views, but this headland is rather special.

Merimbula Trig

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Coastal vegetation, seacliffs, Aboriginal rock shelter. **How to get there:** Drive east from Currarong Post Office agency in Piscator Ave, turning left into Weber Ave and Beecroft Pde and proceeding to Abrahams Bosom Reserve carpark where walk begins. **Total distance from Currarong PO agency:** 0.8 km. **Walking distance:** 6.7 km. **Time:** 2 hr. **Category:** Easy (some climbing). **Map:** Currarong 9027-1-N. **Further information:** Department of Conservation and Land Management, 64 North St, Nowra 2541. Ph.: 044 23 0122.

Once back on the main track find that painted arrows at obscure spots assist in determining the way to go. The actual Merimbula Trig point is marked by an obelisk erected by the NSW Central Mapping Authority in 1974. Just beyond this landmark a viewing platform enables walkers to gaze across forest and beaches to the sea. From the start, it took me about an hour to get to this point. After leaving the trig, the track saunters on for a while before descending into a forested gully in which I passed a group of elderly bushwalkers, one with a mountain bike slung over his shoulder. There are rocky overhangs about here before a footbridge takes you over Abrahams Bosom Creek. The bush is lush and the eucalyptus aroma a delight. The trail climbs out of the gully and passes an Aboriginal Rock Shelter where steps take walkers up to see the low overhang with its sooty floor. The Marions Way/Coomies Walk/Wreck Walk junction is reached, and then the carpark.

5 Murrays Beach

Wooden steps to the right of the toilet block at Murrays Beach carpark give access to this beach from a walking track which soon presents views of Bowen Island, a few buildings and a small jetty. The sandstone island, clothed in heath, woodland and coastal scrub, is part of the Jervis Bay National Park and occupies about fifty-one hectares. Its name commemorates Lieutenant Richard Bowen who, in August 1791, became the first European to sail into these waters, named by him after his commanding officer, Sir John Jervis. At one time there was a holiday lease on the island, but this no longer exists. These days the island is a restricted area and public access is not permitted. The ban is necessary in order to protect little penguin and shearwater breeding grounds on the island. The penguins are prolific—some 18 000 have been known to be on the island in the breeding season. Bowen Island also has Aboriginal shell middens and rock shelters and reminders of World War 2 in the form of a gun emplacement, two observation posts and what was an ammunition magazine. If you are not going

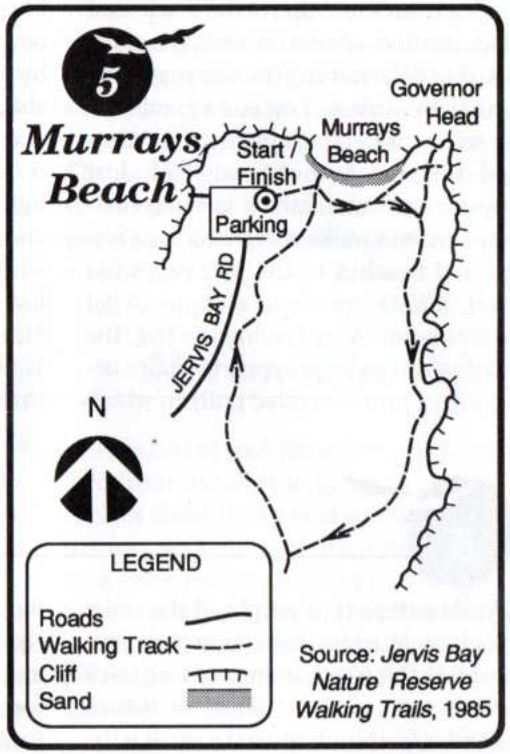
Murrays Beach

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Coastal cliffs, heathland, lighthouse ruins. **How to get there:** From Jervis Bay National Park Information Centre, Jervis Bay Rd, continue driving along Jervis Bay Rd to Murrays Beach carpark where walk begins to right of toilet block. **Total distance from Information Centre:** 8.8 km. **Walking distance:** 6.5 km. **Time:** 2 hr 15 min. **Category:** Easy. **Map:** Sussex Inlet 9027-4-S. **Further information:** Jervis Bay National Park Information Centre, Jervis Bay Rd, Jervis Bay 2540. Ph.: 044 43 0977.

down to the beach, find that the trail proceeds above it and its turquoise-coloured waters. Soon an offshoot (left) of about 0.5 km leads down to Governor Head, a sign warning of precipices ahead. From this commanding vantage point, easily capable of instilling vertigo, you can look out to the sloping southern flank of Bowen Island, waves heaving vainly against its rock barriers.

Turn left when leaving Governor Head, a shortcut taking you back to the main trail which is actually a sandy road. A stroll of ten minutes brings you to another sidetrack which leads walkers down to cliffs where the sea thrusts in spectacular fashion into a tunnel or cave. Behind you, and to the northeast, Point Perpendicular Lighthouse on Beecroft Peninsula stands on what appears to be the first of three great headlands. The country becomes open heathland once you continue the walk. More cliffs appear with the sea rolling into enormous caverns. A pyramid-shaped rise, Murrays Hill, is visible up ahead, then the ruins of Cape St George Lighthouse before coastal scrub blots them out. The hill becomes little more than a pimple on the landscape as you approach it while the ruins reappear on an imposing headland. Binoculars reveal a substantial fissure in the cliff, so maybe the whole lot will topple into the sea one day. The lighthouse was built in 1859 on what was found to be the wrong site. Navy gunfire early this century blasted off the roof and reduced most of the tower to rubble. The lighthouse became a practice target for the gunners because although decommissioned about 1899, it was considered a navigational hazard in daylight. These days we would call such destruction official vandalism.



The RAN training establishment HMAS *Creswell* (deserving of a special visit because of its Georgian-inspired buildings) can be seen across the bay before the track meets a T-junction where you turn right for Murrays Beach, 1.7 km away. The track has been cutting through heath country, but this is left behind as it enters coastal woodland and reaches another T-junction.

Be sure to turn right here, otherwise you will find yourself down at the sealed road leading to the carpark. The trail to the right soon rejoins the outward track and turn left to trudge back to your vehicle.

Early in 1992, on 6 April, the Commonwealth Government announced the proclamation of the Jervis Bay National Park of 6312 hectares encompassing the former Jervis Bay Nature Reserve, Bowen Island, the waters of the Jervis Bay Territory, and places such as Murrays Beach and Green Patch which had been managed in sympathy with the reserve. A statement said the park would "protect a rich variety of coastal and maritime wildlife, and the magnificent scenery of clear waters, sweeping beaches and spectacular cliffs".

The park is all of these things. It is also a highly dangerous environment where visitors should exercise care, especially when scrambling about cliffs of crumbling sandstone or on rocks sometimes washed by the sea.

6 St Georges Head

Several side tracks leading down to rock platforms and beaches en route to St Georges Head mean that walkers with time to spare can turn this half-day stroll into a full-scale outing. The walk is more valuable than some in that you don't have to return exactly the same way as you went out, and as a result the visual experiences are more stimulating.

St Georges Head

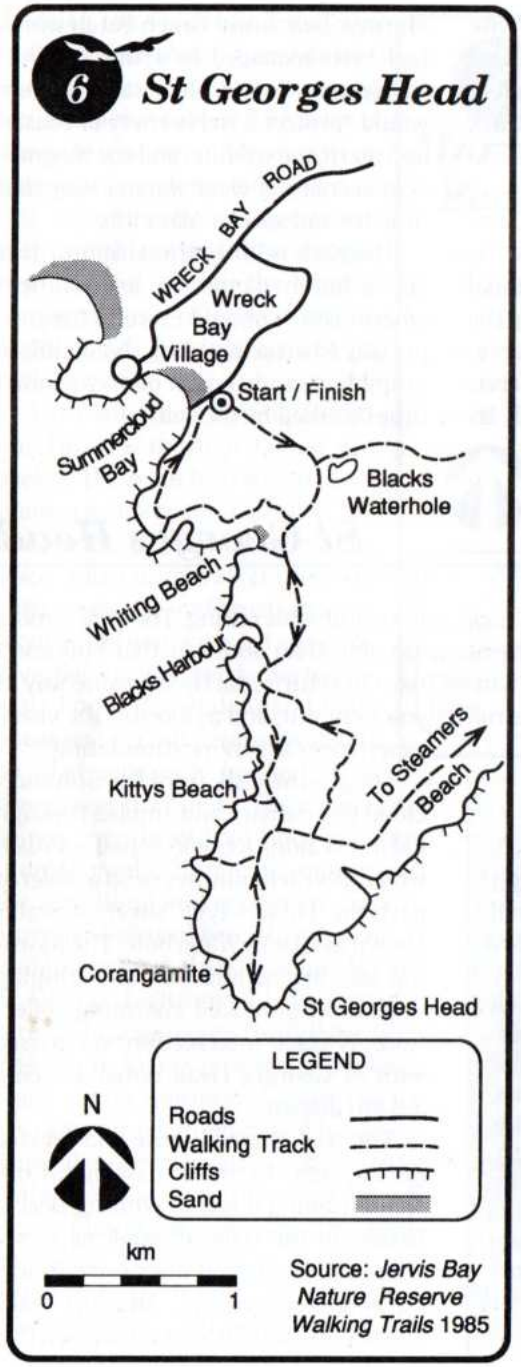
KEY DETAILS

What to see: Beaches, coastal rock formations, forest. **How to get there:** From Jervis Bay National Park Information Centre, Jervis Bay Rd, drive 3.1 km along Jervis Bay Rd turning right at Wreck Bay Rd. Continue for 3.7 km to Summercloud Bay Rd, turning left, then 1.2 km to carpark where walk begins. **Distance from Information Centre:** 8 km. **Walking distance:** 10 km. **Time:** 3 hr 20 min. **Category:** Easy (some climbing). **Map:** Sussex Inlet 9027-4-S. **Further information:** Jervis Bay National Park Information Centre, Jervis Bay Rd, Jervis Bay 2540. Ph.: 044 43 0977.

I began the walk from the Summercloud Bay carpark and ambled through old forest along a track (actually a road) which after ten minutes or so wandered past the lagoon-type sheet of water known as Blacks Waterhole. The morning was bright and still and fringing vegetation produced charming reflections. A track intersection was passed with St Georges Head noted as being 3.8 km distant.

The trail climbed a rise and pressed on through the bush, passing an offshoot heading down to Whiting Beach. Breaks in the trees allowed me to see the ocean and far-off Bherwerre Beach, curving and creamy. Another track down to Blacks Harbour was passed (the

6 St Georges Head



harbour is said to be one of two places in Jervis Bay National Park where igneous rocks, or basaltic intrusions into sandstone, are visible at the surface).

Up ahead the trail split with the left-hand route to St Georges Head, at 2.3 km, being 600 metres longer than the one I took, which is closer to the sea. This became a foot-track for some time with a branch leading to Kittys Beach before the main trail reached a junction. By now I had been walking about fifty minutes and, although there were no signs here, I took the obvious decision, turning right and soon finding myself at another intersection. Here there is a second path to Kittys Beach, 0.9 km to the right, while St Georges Head is 0.7 km away.

I passed an offshoot heading down to the Corangamite headland where I am told boiler plates from the wrecked SS *Corangamite* can be seen. The ship, lavishly appointed and capable of accommodating 230 passengers, was badly holed when she went ashore in dense fog on 6 December 1886 while sailing from Melbourne to Sydney. No-one died, but on 22 December heavy seas caused the vessel to break up. Ceramic tiles from the ship have since been salvaged by divers.

Beyond this offshoot, after pushing through coastal scrub, I arrived at St Georges Head, a giant, shelving, pock-marked rock

outcrop with a north-south outlook—northwards the stupendous bulk of Steamers Head, at 135 metres the highest seacliff on the New South Wales coast, thrust into the sea while to the south-west were beaches, hills and mountains. While roaming the headland I was enthralled by a pair of sea eagles hanging motionless and then gliding off twenty metres above me.

On my return I elected to take the longer route, and beyond the last Kittys Beach sign (on the outward journey) walked uphill to reach a point where the downhill trail to Summercloud Bay, 3.6 km away to the left, met with the track to Steamers Beach, 4.3 km off. (This bay is said to have been named after another wreck, the barque *Summer Cloud*, forced ashore at Wreck Bay on 10 October 1870.)

The Summercloud Bay trail soon became a steep climb before it ran downhill again or along flat stretches. Twisted and lumpy eucalypts in old growth forest intertwined overhead and cobwebs dangled across the track. It took me twenty minutes to reach the St Georges Head/Kittys Beach junction encountered on the outward journey. I was glad to have chosen the Kittys Beach foot-track route to St Georges Head because otherwise there would have been persistent climbing.

Soon after leaving this intersection I chose to diverge again from the main trail at a sign pointing to the Summercloud Bay carpark; this was after walking for 4 km, or about an hour, from St Georges Head. Taking this detour was another smart decision in that it provided me with handsome views of massed forest, rock, beach and sea. Summercloud Bay came into focus about thirty minutes from the turnoff, with the buildings of Wreck Bay village perched on hills behind it. The hazardous NSW coast has claimed many vessels down the years and this part is no exception. Wreck Bay itself is said to have been named following the loss of the *Mynora* steamship which ran ashore on 6 April 1864 while on a voyage from Moruya to Sydney.

Within a few minutes I had reached the Summercloud Bay carpark and was at my vehicle. The return walk from St Georges Head had taken me about two hours and, at 6 km, was about 2 km longer than going out. Some may find it more pleasurable to walk the Summercloud Bay route on the outward journey rather than Blacks Waterhole. No risk, the views are better.

7 Florance Head

I became disgruntled after striking miserable weather when I made the walk to Florance Head for the purposes of this book. When the day is fine you can see deep into Morton National Park and the Budawang fastness, but on this outing I had to make do with views along the coastal plain and the spectral outline of that famous landmark, Pigeon House mountain, lightly sketched in mist and

Florance Head

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Pigeon House mountain, Budawangs, coastal views. **How to get there:** From Milton Post Office, continue north on Princes Highway for 8.6 km, turning left at Porters Creek Dam sign (Pointer Gap Rd). Drive on to a T-junction, turning left and reaching Little Forest Walking Track trackhead. **Total distance from Milton PO:** 21.6 km. **Walking distance:** 6.2 km (return). **Time:** 1 hr 50 min. **Category:** Easy. **Maps:** Tianjara 8927-1-S, Milton 8927-2-N. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 24 Berry St, Nowra 2540. Ph.: 044 23 9800.

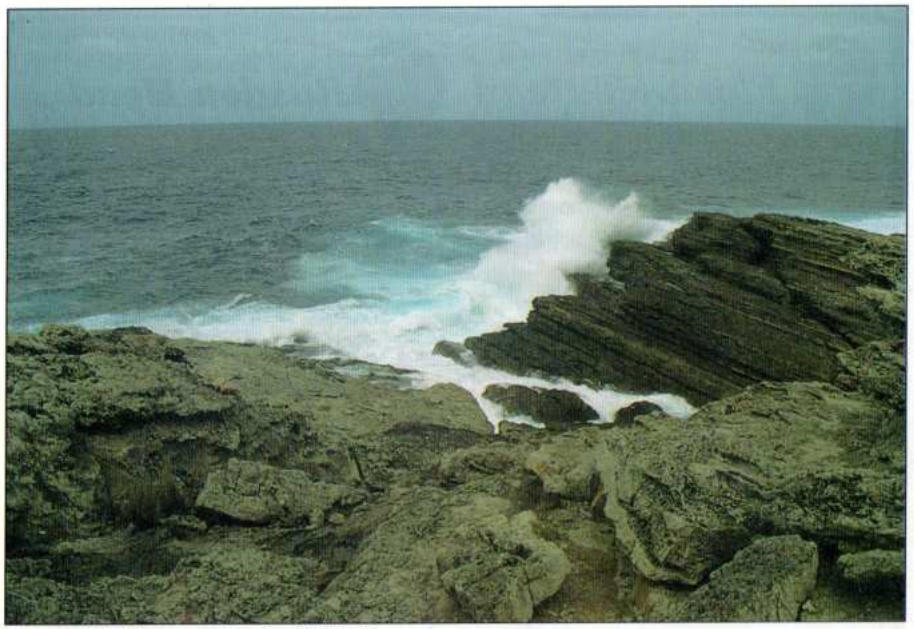
showers. Weather along the south coast is fickle and clear days are a matter of chance.

From the trackhead carpark simply follow a new man-made path for about 0.5 km to where the Florance Head and Rusden Head (see Walk 8) walking tracks begin. There's a spectacular view to the south-west of Pigeon House from this starting point—I had in fact witnessed this grand sight on a previous occasion, but on that day the walk was done simply for pleasure without a camera or notebook in sight.

The "research" walk to Florance Head showed that it is an undemanding stroll mostly along a 4WD track deeply rutted in places. Water was overflowing from these holes and mud and wet stones caused the occasional slip. Here and there users have cut new tracks apparently to avoid puddles and slush. As a consequence, the track is widening in some places. Track rehabilitation may be on the maintenance program, or should be if it is not.

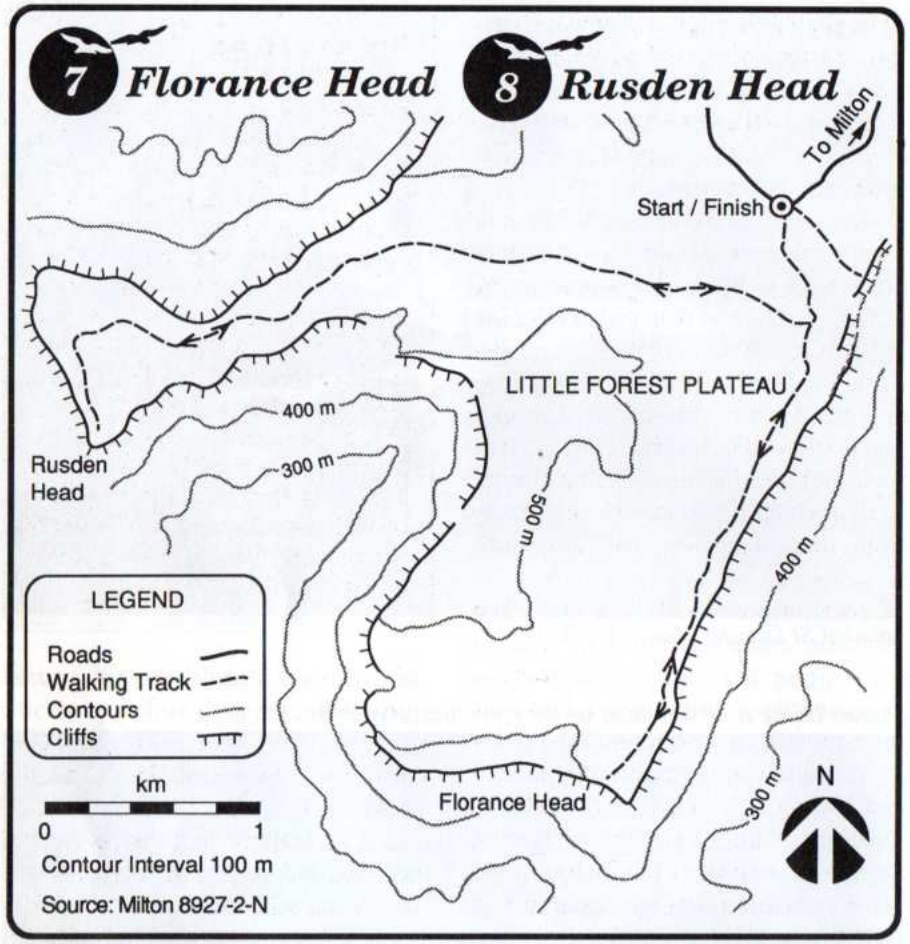
The trail skirts an almost bare plain of low-lying mallees and heaths (home to the endangered emerald green ground parrot which I have seen a few times), although it is dotted with occasional patches of woodland. On the left, or escarpment side, trees and scrub grow between track and drop. I had been walking for thirty minutes when Pigeon House, my indifferent companion from the start, disappeared from sight behind a gentle rise. Soon afterwards, the stony escarpment edge became a grandstand from which to view hilly farms and forests, flat land, beaches and a massive headland nosing into the South Pacific—all visible in much clearer weather. Walkers should be wary on this escarpment because in places the cliffs fall sheer.

Coastline views became more pronounced from the trail itself as it climbed gradually. Pigeon House reappeared while to the west other Budawang peaks drifted in and out of the murk. The Florance Head track ends suddenly on the escarpment edge and what I recalled as a memorable outlook across a chasm was obliterated by a complete whiteout. Frustrated, I retraced my steps abusing those perverse deities who so often make mountainous areas damp and dismal places.



Isolated St Georges Head (Walk 6)

Pigeon House is 10 km away as the crow flies (Walk 9)



8 Rusden Head

After my Florance Head experience (see Walk 7) I was lucky with the weather on the next occasion I visited Little Forest Plateau. The day was cloudless and balmy and presented the Morton National Park/Budawang mountains in all their splendour. This time I wanted to walk to Rusden Head and set off from next to the start point for the Florance Head walk. This was after goggling at the perfection of Pigeon House mountain seen from where the two tracks depart. I found that the Rusden Head trail soon levelled out after an inauspicious beginning of deep ruts and became a smooth surface for what was mostly a relaxed stroll across the plateau. The track, yet again a former 4WD

road, passed through straggly bush before the first of several bogs had to be skirted. Pigeon House dominated the landscape to the left while to the right, after thirty minutes, the cliffs of a flat peak were prominent.

The trail entered a more substantial forest and there was an opportunity to see the sheer cliffs of the plateau on the left. Pigeon House reappeared after being blocked by trees and the track became overgrown for a time (there may be a case for route markers in future). I had covered about 4 km before I heard my first bird, the silence being similar to that which I have experienced many times in Namadgi National Park, south of Canberra.

Pigeon House slid behind bush for a few minutes and the track swung in an easterly direction to end abruptly on the very edge of a gigantic chasm. This platform presents a spectacular view of Pigeon House Gorge, the mountain itself and the flat top and straight sides of Talaterang Mountain. Other peaks and dense forest on their flanks and in the valleys enhanced the spectacle. If you gaze to the right along the precipice, you can get an excellent appreciation of the frightening drop beneath you. Children should be kept under control about here.

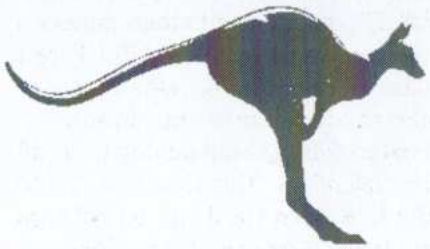
The sudden arrival of two jet fighters from behind Pigeon House served to smash the silence. They weaved over the ranges, leaving a shattering roar in their wake. Later a chopper clattered about Pigeon House, so even in this isolated place it was impossible to escape man-made din.

Rusden Head

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Pigeon House mountain, many other peaks, cliffs. **How to get there:** From Milton Post Office, continue north on Princes Highway for 8.6 km, turning left at Porters Creek Dam sign (Pointer Gap Rd). Drive on to a T-junction, turning left and reaching Little Forest Walking Track trackhead. **Total distance from Milton PO:** 21.6 km. **Walking distance:** 8.5 km (return). **Time:** 3 hr (return). **Category:** Easy. **Maps:** Tianjara 8927-1-S, Milton 8927-2-N. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 24 Berry St, Nowra 2540. Ph.: 044 23 9800.

The return journey was painless. If your eyes are sharp you will see the mast of a television transmitting station above trees to the east. This is a good marker for the end of the trail although it stands a few hundred metres beyond the trackhead. When I walked to Rusden Head it was still mid winter, but wattle and wildflowers were beginning to appear. These displays should heighten enjoyment of the stroll if it were made in August/September/October.



Brush Island, where George Bass spent a night in 1798 (Walk 12)

Heading down towards Myrtle Beach (Walk 14)

9 Pigeon House Grandstand

This walk, as with the other two on Little Forest Plateau (see Walks 7 and 8), is along what the map describes as a 4WD track, although unlike the other two there are no markers and no notice board about it at the start. This is a roundabout way of saying that it is not an "official" trail in the eyes of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. It starts at a locked gate just off the Tianjara fire trail where there is a "Welcome to the Budawangs" sign, and soon provides views of the cliffs and gorges of this astonishing area. These views become more pronounced with the domes, isolated and straight-sided peaks of what resembled a mountainous wall, broken in places, making me wish I was more familiar with it and could identify with authority what I was looking at.

Pigeon House Grandstand

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Pigeon House mountain, other peaks. **How to get there:** From Milton Post Office, continue north on Princes Highway for 8.6 km, turning left at Porters Creek Dam sign (Pointer Gap Rd). Drive on to a T-junction, turning right and after 4 km reaching parking bays and locked gate on left. **Total distance from Milton PO:** 22.8 km. **Walking distance:** 7.5 km (return). **Time:** 2 hr (return). **Category:** Easy. **Maps:** Tianjara 8927-1-S, Milton 8927-2-N. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 24 Berry St, Nowra 2540. Ph.: 044 23 9800.

After I had been walking for fifteen minutes I passed the rusting hulk of a station wagon, a curious spectacle in what is now a fairly remote place. About here, perhaps a few minutes before the wreck, the track shoots off to the left, but ignore this (if you are in doubt it is blocked by fallen trees) and keep going more or less straight. Fire has been through bush on the left which is regenerating while on the right it is open ground. The track, which was wretched in places with numerous boggy patches, ploughed determinedly on and after twenty-five minutes gave me my first sight of Pigeon House mountain rising above the scrub and trees. To the left were the open spaces of Little Forest Plateau.

The track swung in a westerly direction and presented another fine view of the Budawangs, seemingly stretching in a great arc, before what was at times an indistinct trail ran downhill and along the rim of a forested gully. I had been walking almost an hour and was brassed off with squelching through the bogs and puddles (there had been plenty of rain around here before my visit) when I reached a rock platform that gave me a dramatic view of Pigeon House mountain. It resembled a pyramid with a dome on top as it stood in supreme isolation directly to the south between Rusden Head on the left and Talaterang Mountain on the right. Between my vantage point and Pigeon House the ground fell away in a series of cliff-size steps towards Pigeon House Gorge.

My map showed that the 4WD track continued on for a bit, but I decided that the perfection of this view made it a good spot to stop and then to return. If the ground had been dry I probably would have continued the exploration of this place which may well have revealed more Budawang sights to drool over. I was a little surprised to find that I was climbing, albeit gently, for most of the first 2 km of the return walk. A view of the coast and a headland jutting into the sea could be had after about fifteen minutes. Back at my vehicle I was pleased with this venture. It was undertaken on impulse, yet the sights made it one to treasure.

10 South Pacific Heathland Reserve

According to a birdlist for the South Pacific Heathland Reserve in Ulladulla, ninety species of birds have been sighted within the reserve or around the adjacent foreshore. About the same number of different plants has also been recorded. So it can be appreciated that this small holding of native bush is valuable on at least two counts, especially as development in the Ulladulla district and the consequent loss of habitat is reducing bird and plant species. As an example of these losses, six recorded birds, the ground parrot, blue-winged parrot, chestnut-tailed heath-wren, eastern bristle-bird, eastern whipbird and banded finch, now are unlikely to be seen in the reserve. In addition, when I walked through it in April 1992, fire had ravaged part of the reserve, diminishing its overall visual impact and value for sightseers. Children were the suspected arsonists.

Nevertheless, honeyeaters, spinebills, wattlebirds, friar birds, plovers and sooty oystercatchers are among frequent visitors to the reserve. Five different heathland communities can be seen—woodland/forest, mallee/heath, heath on coastal sand deposits, coastal scrub, and wet heaths.

That this coastal place survives at all is due largely to the efforts of an amateur ornithologist and naturalist, Chris Humphries, who settled in Ulladulla in 1947 and thought of the future reserve as a beautiful, unspoilt area when he went for walks there. Part of the land was acquired in 1961 and another eight hectares in 1975, but it was not until 1986 that Commonwealth funds were made available for work to develop the reserve to make it more accessible to human visitors.

A nature walk through the reserve is named after Chris Humphries and begins at the Dowling St trackhead. Within a few minutes beach and sea can be seen, and the Ulladulla Lighthouse sitting on Warden Head. Just beyond this lookout point in the reserve, the track heads up a rise from which there are sublime views of Pigeon House mountain. Soon afterwards, a sign marking the site of the old coast road is passed, and the trail meanders past, in turn, Shell Grit Cove and a lookdown on to tessellated rock platforms. It was from this spot that I watched a white-breasted sea eagle fleeing from what appeared to be a flock of ravens, possibly after its catch.

A foot-track leads off from the lookdown and skirts another town road to rejoin the main trail. Turn left in a short while and find that the trail you are on takes you back to the start. The vision of those who worked to preserve this tiny area of fourteen hectares must be applauded, especially as otherwise it may have been swallowed by nondescript housing of the type present on three sides. Yet how better the reserve would be today if the original site had only been larger.

South Pacific Heathland Reserve

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Seascape, native plants, birdlife. **How to get there:** Drive south on Princes Highway from Ulladulla PO, cnr Princes Highway/Green St, to Dowling St. Turn left to find trackhead 300 metres away on right. **Total distance from Ulladulla PO:** 1.5 km. **Walking distance:** 2 km. **Time:** 30 min. **Category:** Easy. **Map:** Milton 8927-2-N. **Further information:** Department of Conservation and Land Management, 64 North St, Nowra 2541. Ph.: 044 23 0122.

11 Pigeon House

The first 800 metres of this walk is extremely steep, a fact made worse for me in July 1992 because a violent gale was rushing through the silver topped ash (*Eucalyptus sieberi*) forest lining both sides of the track. The sky was gloomy and the constant buffeting of the wind and its overhead roar as it pounded the trees were severe enough to induce intense melancholy. I knew I would get to the base of Pigeon House, unless I was brained by falling timber en route, but I was apprehensive about reaching the summit if I had to fight the wind on four exposed ladders at the end of the walk.

The track winds around giant rocks as it nears the top of the ridge from the carpark and there are granite platforms about here from which to gaze at the mountains and forests unfolding to the south and west. Directly ahead, to the north, is Pigeon House, in these frightening conditions looking more than ever like some baronial fortress from the Middle Ages.

Once on top of the ridge the walk becomes an easy stroll and I felt happier up here with the dense vegetation serving to soften the effects of the gale. Wildflowers and wattle were beginning to bloom giving the bush a more cheerful air than down below where fire had blackened the western slopes. The gale returned in full fury as the track began to climb, at first gently then steeply. A

Pigeon House

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Mountains, forests, coastal views. **How to get there:** From Ulladulla Post Office, cnr Princes Highway/Green St, drive south toward Batemans Bay for 7 km turning right off highway at Wheelbarrow Rd. Turn left into Woodburn Rd, right into Clyde Ridge forest road and right into Yadboro forest road. A side road (right) takes you to car park. **Total distance from Ulladulla PO:** 30 km. **Walking distance:** 7 km (return). **Time:** 2 hr 30 min. **Extent of climb:** 490 metres. **Category:** Hard. **Maps:** Milton 8927-2-N, Tabourie 8927-11-S. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 24 Berry St, Nowra 2540. Ph.: 044 23 9800. **Road conditions:** Treacherous in wet. Call District Forester, NSW Forestry Commission, Batemans Bay, ph. 044 72 6211, before departure.

short wooden ladder helps walkers over a difficult spot at the base of the dovecot-like slabs of rock making up the summit. From here it is matter of scrambling around the western flank and up a defile to the first of the ladders.

My fear that I would be unable to handle them in the wind was groundless because clefts in the rock sheltered me from the blast until I had negotiated all four ladders pinned to the rock wall. Two metal walkways were crossed and then it became a simple climb to the summit. But I had to fight to stand upright on top and consequently gave myself only a few minutes in which to admire the spreading vista of peaks, forests, ridges, cliffs and the sea before reluctantly heading back, wondering as I did so whether I would ever return to this sensational lookout.

It took me about seventy-five minutes to complete the 3.5 km walk from the carpark, and about an hour to return. Doubtless if the weather had been kinder I would have lingered on both the outward journey and the return which I accomplished as fast as my legs would carry me. I looked back at Pigeon House a couple of times and it remained as black and as forbidding as when I had approached it.

Cook gave this dominant feature its highly appropriate name when he discovered the east coast of Australia in 1770. The Beaglehole edition of the explorer's journal states that "At noon [on 21 April] we were by observation in the latitude 35°23' and long de 209°23'. Cape Dromedary bore S28° west dist 19 leag. A remarkable peaked hill laying inland the top of which look'd like a Pigeon house and occasioned me giving it that name bore NW dist 2 or 3 leagues."

A correspondent has written that "Any person who has had the pleasure of witnessing the view of the Pigeon House from the sea off Ulladulla could understand the interest shown in its discovery in those days of unsure navigation. The Pigeon House itself is visible from the sea from Batemans Bay to at least Jervis Bay and probably further

. . . [it] can be seen from Robertson and Cambewarra Mountain in the north (40-50 miles) and from Mt Wandera in the south (30 miles)."

The first white men to climb the mountain were Alexander Berry, Thomas Davison and Hamilton Hume in January 1822. However, for many thousands of years before this sweaty achievement local Aboriginals from the Walbanja and Wandandian tribes were active in the area, calling the peak Dithol, Did-Dell or Diddel. According to a brochure, the mountain had "great significance for the Aboriginals because of its prominence and its proximity to one of their trading routes from the coast to the tablelands. They occupied coastal sites near here for 20,000 years. The oldest known [Aboriginal] site near Pigeon House is 3,500 years old."

12 *Murramarang Aboriginal Area*

There is nothing at the parking area near Racecourse Beach to tell anyone that a walk with markers and explanatory boards has been constructed in the Murramarang Aboriginal Area at Bawley Point although the authorities have produced a first-rate brochure about the history of this midden, its significance to Aboriginal people and the walk itself. The track runs down the left-hand side of a fence protecting a revegetation zone and then slides to the right to cross dunes to reach a "Murramarang Aboriginal Area" signpost. From here, to the right, a deliberate gap in a fence guarding the midden can be seen. This gives access to the walking track and its signs although two of these had been defaced when I visited the area and another was missing. Another point of disquiet was that sometimes the trail and its markers were hidden by head-high coastal vegetation, making the walk difficult at times and occasionally frustrating. (Later I received advice that trails are cleared regularly and signs replaced—"You looked at a bad time," was a comment.)

The track wanders around the foreshore providing typical coastal views of beaches and rocks. Wooded Brush Island, where Aboriginals of ancient times

Murramarang Aboriginal Area

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Aboriginal midden, coastal views, beaches, island. **How to get there:** Travel to Bawley Pt (6 km off Princes Highway at Termeil) and from the Bawley Pt general store, Murramarang Rd, drive on same road to parking area next to a Racecourse Beach sand mine. Walk begins here. **Total distance from Bawley Pt general store:** 2.5 km. **Walking distance:** 3.5 km. **Time:** 1 hr 30 min. **Category:** Easy. **Map:** Kioloa 8926-1-N. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 24 Berry St, Nowra 2540. Ph.: 044 23 9800.

caught mutton birds, is but a short distance from shore and is now a nature reserve. (Cook, in 1770, saw Brush Island from the *Endeavour*, but on 23 April abandoned an attempt to find safe shelter behind the island and make a landing at Murramarang. He and others on board did see Aboriginals for the first time, one of the ship's company recording they saw "four or five . . . Indians . . . naked and very black". Twenty-eight years later, the naval surgeon George Bass was to spend a night on Brush Island on his return to Sydney after an exploratory voyage in an open whaleboat as far south as Western Port Bay.) There is evidence that Aboriginals camped in the Murramarang area over an immense period of time, more than 12 000 years, and sometimes buried their dead in the sands. The overall midden site is rich in stone tools and the remains of thousands of meals. Shellfish, seals and beached whales figured in the Aboriginals' diet. Today the headland, nearby Swan Lagoon and distant Pigeon House and Durras Mountain are said to be of strong mythological importance to local Aboriginals. According to the brochure, the lagoon "is home to the serpent associated with traditional religious beliefs about the creation of the land."

The European expansionary tide was to reach the district in the 1820s with the earliest homestead, Murramarang, having been built by convicts in 1834 as a cottage. A sign notes that by 1841 it was large enough to house eighteen adults and five children. The Aboriginal Area, occupying sixty hectares of Murramarang Point, was declared in 1976 in recognition of its "cultural, archaeological and educational significance." Before this, the midden had been plundered for its artefacts and what the authorities call its "rich assemblages". Uncontrolled vehicle use caused severe erosion.

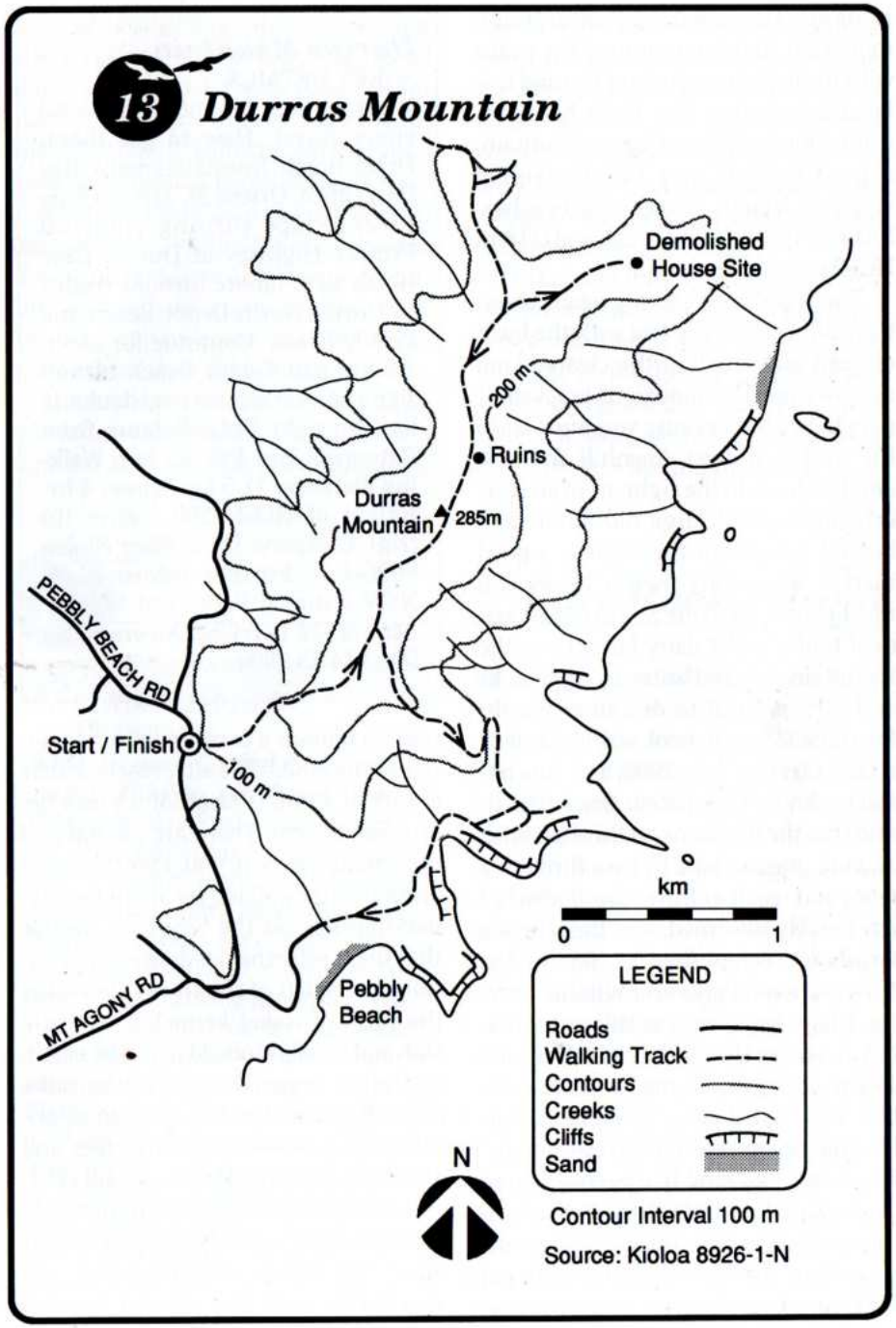
The trail ends at another fence opening and turn left here to follow a beach road back to the start point.

13 Durras Mountain

From the parking spot, walk steeply uphill on a so-called road which is a mass of deep holes. Yet its dreadful condition does not deter some people from forcing their vehicles along this crazy track on the slopes of the Murramarang Range. The gullies about here occasionally resemble rainforest although sometimes the sea mist lingers masking this particular feature. After a hard fifteen minutes, find that the track passes through a fence and the climb becomes easier. The trees are thinner, straighter up here. Grasses grow prolifically.

Ten minutes further on and the bush is left behind and you enter farmland not grazed now. To the north and west the ranges of the Budawangs and Morton National Park are their familar blue and purple, albeit occasionally blotted out by mist and cloud. To the right

Continued, page 32



is the sea. On a good day Pigeon House mountain stands out among the peaks with its distinctive dovecot top and isolated appearance. The track heads towards Durras Trig on Durras Mountain, a good lookout over the developing views of islands, coves and beaches. Snapper Point, Merry Beach and O'Hara Headland can be identified.

The track rises steeply again about ten minutes past the trig with the bush obvious and much of the cleared land now swamped by obnoxious bracken. It pays to be alert because you must leave the road as it dives downhill and take another track to the right, or in an easterly direction. A large old water tank behind a fence on the right is a good marker, about fifty metres before you must turn right. (One South Coast resident told me that dairy farmers on the mountain pumped water to such tanks and then piped it to drinking troughs for stock.) The offshoot was blocked by a fallen tree in July 1992, but this obstacle can be negotiated. Once past it, find that the trail runs on through bush and old grazing land to pass through a fence and reach a cleared knoll which, I am reliably informed, was the site of a farmhouse demolished in 1983 by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. I have few details of this structure, but it seems that it was not that old. The reason given to me for its demolition was that it was "severely vandalised and beyond economic restoration." The house and land had been acquired by the Coastal Lands Protection Committee and given to the Service for inclusion in the Murramarang National Park. Another reason for its destruction was "to honour a comitment to the donor of the land." The site, reached after a walk of 4 km, is ideal for a break before you return. There are coastal and mountain views if you care to move around. After walking for about twenty-five minutes on the way back, notice that there is further evidence of habitation on the left of the track. This takes the form of a dog kennel, a concrete slab and bricks embedded in the earth, and other concrete slabs in the same area. This was the general site of another farm dwelling. Exotic trees and shrubs were planted here and still exist.

I decided to lengthen the return walk by leaving the trail at a point on the left about 300 metres past Durras Trig and marked by posts that prevent vehicles from entering this offshoot. Similar obstacles are frequent in the initial stages as the track twists downhill for about 1.7 km. At times it is almost indistinguishable from the surrounding bush; sometimes it is visibly an old road, at others no more than a foot-track. Finally it meets another trail near the sea and turn right here at a Durras Mountain sign with an arrow pointing back the way you have come. I prefer the descent rather than the climb.

The track pushes on, skirting a bay with tall, rocky cliffs and a beach of boulders and shingle. After ascending for a time find that the trail runs downhill to end at the neat (mostly) fibro cottages of Pebbly Beach, a recreation area undergoing much needed restoration when I visited it for the purposes of this book. Just after reaching the first of the cottages I was excited to see a lyrebird skittering across the road.

This picnic area is an excellent location for a swim and lunch before you must climb the testing acess road, turning right at the Pebbly Beach turnoff and trudging another 1.5 km to your vehicle. It takes about forty minutes to get there after leaving the beach.

Durras Mountain

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Mountains, coastal views, forest. **How to get there:** Drive north from Batemans Bay Post Office, Orient St, across Clyde River bridge turning right off Princes Highway at Durras Lake North sign. Ignore turnoffs (right) to Durras North/Depot Beach and Pebbly Beach. Continue for about 1.5 km past Pebbly Beach turnoff sign and park at bush road doubling back on right. **Total distance from Batemans Bay PO:** 23 km. **Walking distance:** 11.5 km. **Time:** 4 hr. **Extent of climb:** 200 metres (to trig). **Category:** Hard. **Map:** Kioloa 8926-1-N. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 24 Berry St, Nowra 2540. Ph.: 044 23 9800.

14 *Flat Rock Island*

Flat Rock Island

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Coastal bush, seascapes. **How to get there:** From Batemans Bay Post Office, Orient St, drive north on Princes Highway turning right at a South Durras road sign. After reaching South Durras, turn right into Banyandah St and continue to Murramarang camp ground. Drive further 300 metres on unsealed Coast Rd to Emily Miller Beach carpark where walk begins. **Total distance from Batemans Bay PO:** 17.8 km. **Walking distance:** 4.5 km. **Time:** 2 hr. **Category:** easy. **Map:** Durras 8926-1-S. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 24 Berry St, Nowra, 2540. Ph.: 044 23 9800.

A path and steps will bring you down onto sheltered Emily Miller Beach after which simply head south to where the sand ends and headland rocks take over. A rough track up through the bush at this point brings you to a clear trail and turn right here to walk through a forest of gnarled and twisted trees of weird shapes. What used to be a fishing shack is passed (all that remains are a few upright posts and a cement floor), and the trail moves inland through spotted gums smooth to touch and with mottled trunks. Cabbage tree palms, or burrawangs, are everywhere.

About 250 metres beyond the shack take an offshoot that veers left. Unmarked and easily missed, it runs parallel with the ocean, crosses a shallow gully and then heads back towards the coastline. Around here steps give access

to Dark Beach with its curious dichotomy of white sand and black shingle, the two halves separated by a rock barrier.

Past Dark Beach turnoff the track reaches a carpark before continuing on until suddenly the forest giants are left behind (birds feeding on flowering eucalypts were making a frenzied racket here in mid winter 1992). A path to the right leads down to the deserted sands of Myrtle Beach while, beyond this beautiful spot, headland walls sheltering Richmond Beach drop to the sea. Back on the main path find it ends dangerously on a cliff edge overlooking the massive sloping platform of Flat Rock Island against which the sea heaves. Although described as an island on maps, this expanse of rock is not separated from the land. Beyond the island, a channel separates it from chunks of rock on which seabirds preen themselves. Away to the south, washed blue mountains can be seen behind two promontories.

On the return you can either retrace your steps through the bush or amble along Coast Rd back to your vehicle at the Emily Miller Beach carpark.

15 North Head Beach

From the carpark, walk down a steep, unmarked track once used by vehicles but now blocked off. The bush is tall and thick about here and burrawang palms are prominent. After levelling out for a while and passing Oaky Beach, the track climbs steadily to meet another trail running east off North Head Rd. Turn right here to reach this road which on maps ends here although on the ground it continues on to North Head. For a while it runs gently downhill before climbing and then dropping towards the glittering sea glimpsed through eucalypts. By now you have been walking for half an hour.

A sign is passed pointing to Honeysuckle Beach, about five minutes away. Continue down North Head Rd ignoring two trails linking with the road on the left. Forty minutes after leaving Oaky Beach carpark, you reach North Head Beach, a mass of pale sand occasionally strewn with seaweed. To the right, the coastline swings in an arc culminating in Three Islets Reef, two of them being clear of vegetation and beige in colour while the other possesses trees and scrub. Further out to sea stand Tollgate Islands at the entrance to Batemans Bay. These islands form a nature reserve and from this distance appear to be crowned by turf. On jagged rocks to the left of North Head Beach, seabirds wait for their next feed.

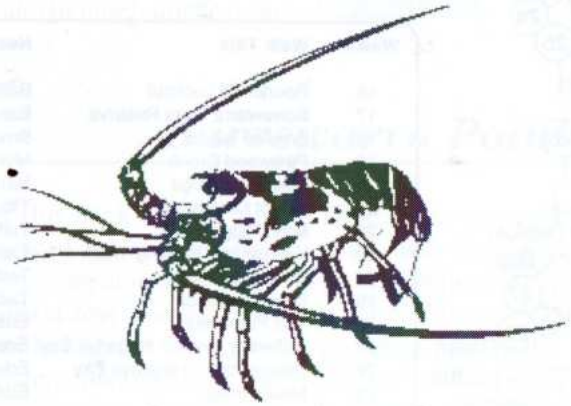
You can extend the North Head Beach walk by strolling down a track which leads to the left just before a fence protecting dune vegetation at the beach entrance. This path wanders through open forest, its floor a mass of palms, to North Head trig on a windy eminence that provides a platform for dramatic coastline vistas. Directly below, the sea washes over rocks while to the north stretches a ragged maze of rocks and indentations. Cliffs fall sheer around here and children should be restrained.

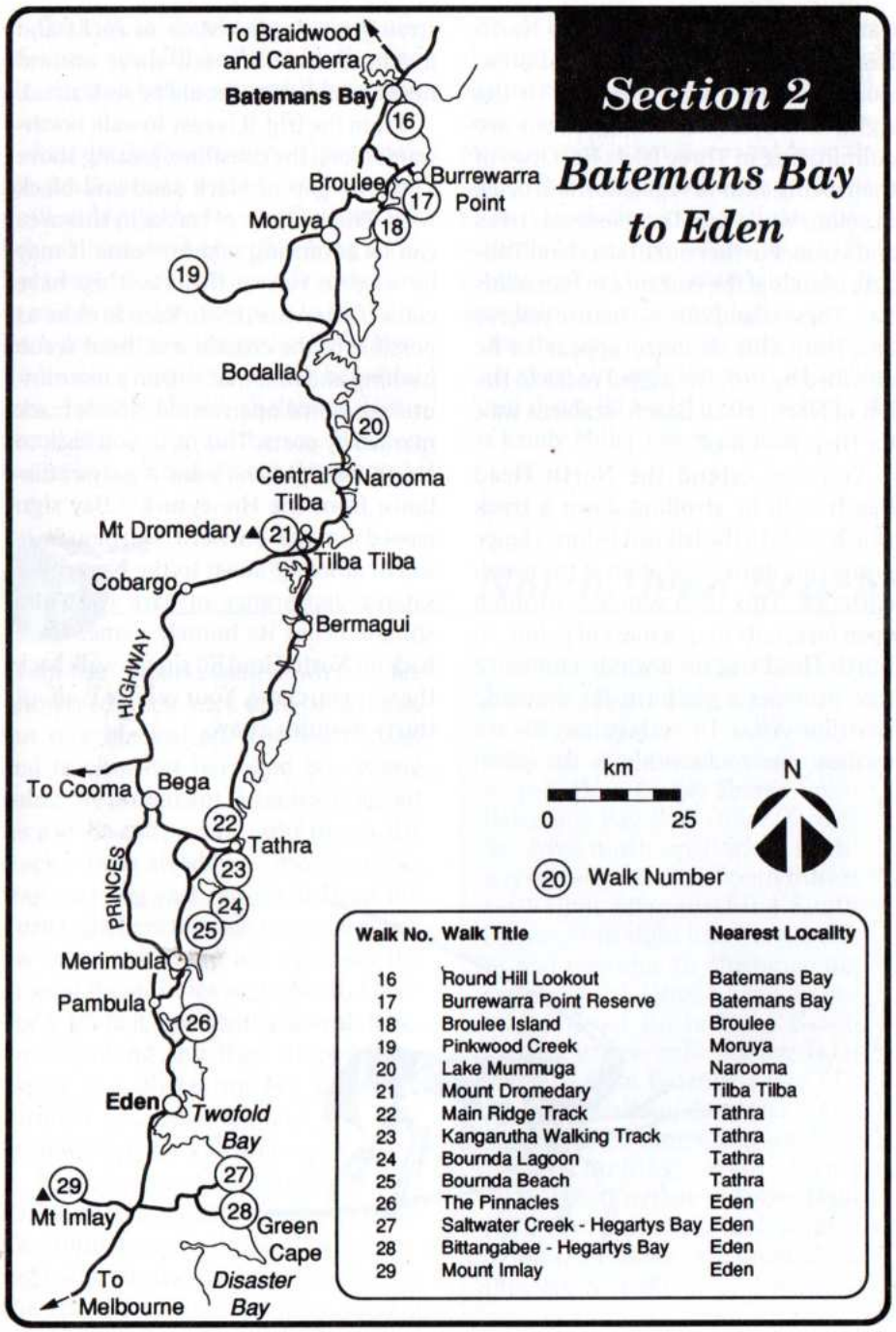
From the trig, it is easy to walk northwards along the coastline, passing above a mighty gap of black sand and black rock. The number of tracks in this area can be confusing and for some it may be wise to return the way they have come. Otherwise, try to keep as close as possible to the coastline without scrub bashing and find that within a few minutes you come upon an old vehicle track marked by posts. This leads you back to North Head Rd and joins it a short distance from the Honeysuckle Bay sign passed on the outward journey. It is worth ambling down to the bay whose satanic appearance of dark rock and shingle belies its homely name. Once back on North Head Rd simply walk back the way you came. Your vehicle is about thirty minutes away.

North Head Beach

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Coastal bush, seascapes. **How to get there:** From Batemans Bay Post Office, Orient St, drive north on Princes Highway turning right at a South Durras road sign. After reaching South Durras, turn right into Banyandah St and continue to Murramarang camp ground. Drive 4.5 km on unsealed Coast Rd to Oaky Beach carpark where walk begins. **Total distance from Batemans Bay PO:** 22.3 km. **Walking distance:** 6 km. **Time:** 1 hr 30 min. **Category:** Easy (some climbing). **Map:** Durras 8926-1-S. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 24 Berry St, Nowra 2540. Ph.: 044 23 9800.





Section 2

Batemans Bay to Eden

Walk No.	Walk Title	Nearest Locality
16	Round Hill Lookout	Batemans Bay
17	Burrewarra Point Reserve	Batemans Bay
18	Broulee Island	Broulee
19	Pinkwood Creek	Moruya
20	Lake Mummuga	Narooma
21	Mount Dromedary	Tilba Tilba
22	Main Ridge Track	Tathra
23	Kangarutha Walking Track	Tathra
24	Bournda Lagoon	Tathra
25	Bournda Beach	Tathra
26	The Pinnacles	Eden
27	Saltwater Creek - Hegartys Bay	Eden
28	Bittangabee - Hegartys Bay	Eden
29	Mount Imlay	Eden

16 Round Hill Lookout

If you have an hour to spare and you want to get an appreciation of the coastal resort of Batemans Bay and its environs from a high vantage point then this short walk in the Mogo State Forest could suit you. Apart from views it has little to commend it and in fact you could drive up to the fire tower on top of Round Hill. A dusty road, steep at first, heads off from the start point next to the Princes Highway and the racket from this busy road and a nearby sawmill remains audible for practically the whole walk. The road you are on passes beneath power lines and there are some fine mountain views to the south-west on a clear day.

The road ends at a fire spotter's tower after a climb of around twenty minutes with the summit presenting views of the sea entrance to Batemans Bay, humpy Tollgate Islands, and the Clyde River bridge. That well-known landmark, Pigeon House mountain, can be seen to the north from here although on the day I made the climb smoke from burning off tended to obscure it. Round Hill summit is a scruffy place—dust swirls about a fireplace and a couple of neglected tables—and I did not linger, returning by a more direct route north of the tower which cut about 200 metres off the walk.

Round Hill Lookout

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Views of Batemans Bay, forests, coastline. **How to get there:** Drive from Eurobodalla Coast Visitors Centre, cnr Beach Rd/Princes Highway, Batemans Bay, south on highway to bush road on left. Walk is signposted and begins at road heading uphill. **Total distance from Visitors Centre:** 3 km. **Walking distance:** 1.8 km. **Time:** 30 min. **Category:** Easy. **Map:** Nelligen 8926-4-S. **Further information:** NSW Forestry Commission, cnr Orient/Crown Sts, Batemans Bay 2536. Ph.: 044 72 6211.

17 Burrewarra Point Reserve

In researching this book I found this track little changed between my first and second visits—separated by seven years. It remains a lovely walk, especially if made in late winter when gorgeous wattles, some hanging over the path, transform otherwise nondescript coastal bush as if showering it with gold. The trail leaves from the reserve carpark at an easily distinguished point and after five minutes is within metres of a sheer cliff from which it is possible to peer down at massive boulders, a sand and shingle beach, and the sea. When I first made the walk in 1985 I recorded the presence of a makeshift wire rope at

Burrewarra Point Reserve
KEY DETAILS
What to see: Bushland, coastal views. **How to get there:** From Eurobodalla Coast Visitors Centre, cnr Beach Rd/Princes Highway, Batemans Bay, drive on Beach Rd then George Bass Dr. to Guerilla Bay turnoff. Continue on Burri Pt Rd to reach Burrewarra Pt Reserve where walk begins. **Total distance from Eurobodalla Coast Vistors Centre:** 20 km. **Walking distance:** 2.3 km. **Time:** 1 hr. **Category:** Easy. **Map:** Mogo 8926-111-N. **Further information:** Eurobodalla Coast Visitors Centre, Princes Highway, Batemans Bay 2536. Ph.: 044 72 6900.

this spot, but this aid to the adventurous wanting a closer look at what is below had disappeared in 1992. Once the stroll is resumed an ugly oval light station quickly comes into view, a track leading up to it and a trig station. A plaque says that this light "is part of a network of navigational aids maintained around Australia's 20 000 km of coastline . . .". The light was established in May 1974 in response to a request from local fishermen. Unlike older lighthouses whose architecture appeals, this effort lacks any character. It's a good example of the concrete age, in fact.

It pays to explore Burrewarra Point. There are views of the sea and curving beaches and away to the south the distinctive humps of Mount Dromedary. To the left of the light, one track, deeply eroded, will take you steeply down to flat grey rocks across which waves swirl, but a better idea is to bypass this and go out onto the point itself. It is possible to pick your way down to the sea without adding to the erosion problems presented by the other track which in my view should be closed off.

Return to the light and find the path continues around the headland presenting views of rocks and distant mountains. Ignore an offshoot to the left (you could of course take it and explore) and find the path rejoins the outward track about 100 metres from the light station. After that simply return to the carpark.

18 Broulee Island

I had never walked around an island before my visit to Broulee Island, so for me the venture was a memorable one. As islands go, Broulee is neither large nor visually significant. It is, in fact, connected to the mainland by a sand bar so that the very name seems pretentious. Nevertheless, on maps it is called an island, and it is familiar to locals as an island, so for my purposes an island it will remain. Violent seas have on occasions washed out the sand bar, leaving a deep channel between the island and the mainland. But the sand always returns. These days Broulee Island is a nature reserve although in the early days

of nineteenth century settlement Europeans lived here and at least one remains—Mrs Abraham Malabar, or Maleber, was aged 45 when she died in 1842 and was buried at the south-eastern end of the island. Her husband, a sea captain and convict, was a "notoriously violent drunkard" who worked a river punt. He was given a conditional pardon in 1837 and at one time had two assigned men in his employ on what Gibbney calls a "squatting farm". Malabar is said to have "terrorised the whole district with outbursts of maniacal drunken violence". His wife's grave is isolated in tussock and scrub and is surrounded by a low cyclone wire fence. The headstone (the surname is spelt Maleber) records that she died on 27 June 1842; another stone at the foot of the grave is inscribed "E.M. 1842". The Malabar name lives on in the district because a Malabar Creek feeds into the Moruya River and there's also a Malabar Road.

A "low shingled weatherboard bungalow" was built on Broulee Island in 1840 and served as a hotel known as the Erin-go-bragh or Erin-go-brach, having been leased to Bernard McAuley in 1841, the same year as the schooner *Rover* was wrecked to the north of the island with the loss of about ten lives. McAuley surrendered the lease in 1844 and some years later the building was dismantled and shifted to Moruya where it was re-erected and became a store and then a private dwelling, subsequently demolished. A few red bricks are said to mark where the hotel was established on Broulee Island, but I did not see them on my visit.

To get to Broulee Island walk down a path leading off from the middle of the carpark at the end of Albert St. Houses are on your right as the track enters bush and reaches the beach. Simply turn left here and walk along the sand to the island and a nature reserve sign (there is a small population of wallabies on the island and rangers urge visitors to leave their dogs at home). I spent some time on the plateau on top of the island after scrambling up through bush, but then returned to the sign and set off around the island, heading north along the sand beach which ended at rocks. Rounding a point I could see across Broulee Bay to the Burrewarra Point Light perched above cliffs (see Walk 17) and then encountered a few old posts and some rusting iron rails, all that remains of a shell-grit enterprise that petered out after World War 2. Boats used to put travellers ashore about here last

Broulee Island
KEY DETAILS
What to see: Beaches, historical remains, coastal views. **How to get there:** Drive in southerly direction on Coronation Dr. from Broulee Beach Shopping Boulevarde to Heath St, turning left and left again at Albert St which ends at parking area. **Total distance from Broulee Beach Shopping Boulevarde:** 1.5 km. **Walking distance:** 4 km. **Time:** 1 hr 15 min. **Category:** Easy. **Map:** Mogo 8926-111-N. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 36 Princes Highway, Narooma 2546. Ph.: 044 76 2888.

century while cattle were shipped from the island around the middle of the 1800s.

Further on, a commemorative plaque cemented into rock remembers Harold Francis (Harry) Newton who lived in Broulee and perhaps other south coast places for about a decade before his death in 1981. He spent his days either fishing or gazing at the sea from rocks in this area, known locally as Pink Rocks. A son, Warren, told me his father suffered grievously from his war experiences as a commando and the only peace he found in life was at Broulee. After Harry's death in the village, his family cast his ashes on the sea in front of the plaque which is affixed in such a position that the rising sun bathes it in light. Other commemorative plaques have been placed on the island, but I did not see them. Driftwood has been tossed high up on the eastern side of the island while on rocks stands a rusting tank which may have been a boiler on some craft (the Maleber grave is directly above this). There is plenty of shingle, but no sand beaches on this side or at the southern end. Coastal banksias, casuarinas, boobiallas, coast wattles, ruby saltbush and westringias are said to grow on the island's exposed cliff faces, while in damp, protected gullies there are lilli pilli, red olive plum, vines and ferns. A grove of muttonwood trees overlooks the sand bar described by one source as being composed of small hillocks or mini-dunes held in place by a plant called sea rocket, beach daisies, grey saltbush and spinifex grass.

The walk of about 2 km ended with me back at the nature reserve sign and I simply retraced my steps to the carpark. Islands have for me the same romantic appeal as lighthouses and I was glad to have spent some time on historic Broulee Island, small though it might be.

19 Pinkwood Creek

You could drive along the road heading down to Pinkwood Creek, but I prefer to leave my car at the sign just off Little Sugarloaf Rd and walk in to where a giant log and a mound of dirt effectively stop further vehicular progress. Before this, the track switchbacks along, initially in a northerly direction then west to pass a sign pointing the way downhill to the creek. In places on the way in gullies are lush with ferns. Beyond the barriers a foot-track descends quickly to reach the waterway, about 1.5 km from the start point. There was little flow in the stone-filled creek in August 1992, yet it was an entrancing place with dense forest all around and sunlight penetrating with difficulty. Some of the eucalypts about here grow to extraordinary heights. As the creek name suggests, this is home to pinkwood (*Eucryphia moorei*), described elsewhere as having "vari-coloured trunks . . . with [a] soft down of moss".

Continued, page 42

Flat Rock Island, culmination of Walk 14

Malabar grave, Broulee Island (Walk 18)

I intended to cross the creek and continue the walk uphill to where the track (the original route towards Bendethera) rejoins Little Sugarloaf Rd, but before I could do this a young man suddenly appeared from the hidden track opposite me. I discovered later he was on a trail bike ride from Captains Flat to the coast and to say I was startled by his arrival in this isolated spot is no exaggeration. He had left his bike near Little Sugarloaf Rd and appeared as bemused as I was. Our meeting occurred just after the murder of a bushwalker in the Blue Mountains and the dangers of walking alone came home to me forcefully.

Across the creek the track is hard to follow for the first fifty metres, so thick is the rainforest about here. Gullies were a mass of green. There were many timber obstacles across the path and these remained a hindrance on much of this leg of the walk until I regained Little Sugarloaf Rd. I have been told these obstacles are the consequences of a 1983 wildfire. As well, saplings are growing on parts of the trail, making it narrower. The NSW Forestry Commission intends to "terminate" this Coondella-Plumwood fire trail 250 metres south of [Little] Sugarloaf Rd and 300 metres south of the crossing on Pinkwood Creek. This could mean that if you want to walk this route you will need map and compass. I found the ascent out of the creek a severe test of my fitness and had to stop a couple of times. The track lurches along, with a descent or two and a couple of flatter bits interspersed with stiff climbs and the negotiation of obstacles. More fallen logs blocked the track as it rose steeply before levelling off to meet Little Sugarloaf Rd opposite a Coondella Fire Trail sign.

By now I had covered around 3.5 km since leaving the car. I turned right on Little Sugarloaf Rd to reach the turnoff to Hanging Mountain (signposted) after walking along the road for a kilometre. About the same distance brought me to the Hanging Mountain lookout, where a sign warns of cliffs ahead. It was a thrill to stand on the very edge of a remarkable precipice looking across a gigantic forested ravine to range upon range of hills and mountains. To the south-east, hump-backed Mount Dromedary stood in supreme isolation. The cliffs are sheer so be watchful if you visit here. Some twenty-five minutes after leaving this absorbing place and continuing what was now a stroll back to the car, I had reached a Forestry Commission sign which noted that cattlemen using the Bendethera trail in the 1880s, referred to Hanging Mountain because many trees appeared to hang from its sides. The road had been snaking downhill, but from the sign it again climbed steeply before easing off as I approached the walk's start point. I had enjoyed the slog through the bush and unlike some other forest roads the Little Sugarloaf Rd had not been monotonous. Sure, you can drive up to Hanging Mountain, but where's the fun in doing that?

Pinkwood Creek

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Rainforest, mountain vistas. **How to get there:** From Moruya Post Office, Campbell St, Moruya, drive on Campbell and Luck Sts to Womban Rd turnoff on left after 3.3 km. Womban Rd links with Little Sugarloaf Rd and after driving for 27.7 km from turnoff find Pinkwood Creek sign at road heading left off Little Sugarloaf Rd. **Total distance from Moruya PO:** 31 km. **Walking distance:** 7.5 km. **Time:** 2 hr 30 min. **Category:** Hard. **Maps:** Moruya 8926-3-S, Bodalla 8925-4-N, Nerrigundah 8825-1-N, Bendethera 8826-11-S. **Further information:** NSW Forestry Commission, PO Box 219, Narooma 2546. Ph: 044 76 2488.

20 *Lake Mummuga*

This undemanding walk is a simple way of relaxing with some exercise while taking a spell in a long drive on the Princes Highway. It begins from the picnic area off this road and winds through coastal bush next to a narrow arm of the lake which is much bigger than the impression gained from here and possesses a tiny island—Amherst Island. Casuarinas are reflected in the calm waters. The trail skirts the lake and a house can be glimpsed through trees; in reality this is some distance away on the southern side of the lake. More expansive views of Lake Mummuga appear as the walk proceeds, together with glimpses of Dalmeny houses.

The track moves closer to the lake edge before veering inland in a westerly direction. It becomes a dirt road and I took a left turning to return to the car park. From the map it seems I could have extended the walk by ambling further along the road and taking a second turning to the left, but I chose not do so.

Little more can be said about this walk. Those who dislike strolling through the bush accompanied for part of the way by the howl of highway traffic, plus in this case the racket from a nearby sawmill, may decide to give Lake Mummuga a miss. Otherwise if noise is no concern it's a pleasant way of spending an hour or so.

Lake Mummuga is the sixth in a succession of seven lakes on the eastern side of a short stretch of the Princes Highway, ranging from Coila Lake, north of Tuross Head, to Kianga Lake, north of Narooma. There are others beyond Narooma to the NSW/Victoria border.

Lake Mummuga

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Bush, lake views. **How to get there:** Drive from Narooma Post Office, adjacent to Princes Highway, north on highway to Bodalla Forest Park where walk begins. **Total distance from Narooma PO:** 10 km. **Walking distance:** 2.75 km. **Time:** 45 min. **Category:** Easy. **Map:** Narooma 8925-4-S. **Further information:** NSW Forestry Commission, PO Box 219, Narooma 2546. Ph.: 044 76 2488.

Fallen logs create obstacles (Walk 19)

Signs aplenty on the Dromedary summit (Walk 21)

21 Mount Dromedary

Don't be fooled by the flat start to this walk from Pam's Store through dairying country. The Tilba Tilba Track as it is known runs between private properties and within minutes begins to ascend. From here there's practically no respite from climbing all the way to the summit and at times it is a gruelling hike. The trig stands 797 metres above sea level while Tilba Tilba is at a modest altitude meaning that almost all of this height has to be climbed. The toughness of the walk is in keeping with the dark and sombre appearance of the mountain, clothed in eucalypts and rainforest.

After the first twenty minutes take time out to look back at the smaller yet engrossing Little Dromedary Mountain, closer to the coast and having a sharp and rocky western flank. Soon afterwards a locked gate is reached. Dense rainforest fills a gully and trees shade the path about here—in August 1992 I found this very acceptable because the late winter sun was already warm. The first of several Forestry Commission signs is passed with a picture of a group having a day's outing on the mountain in 1889. Curiously, there are fourteen women and girls in this picture, all dressed in voluminous ankle-length skirts, but only two men. A second sign is passed, this one having a picture of a dray carting a boiler into an old mining site many years ago.

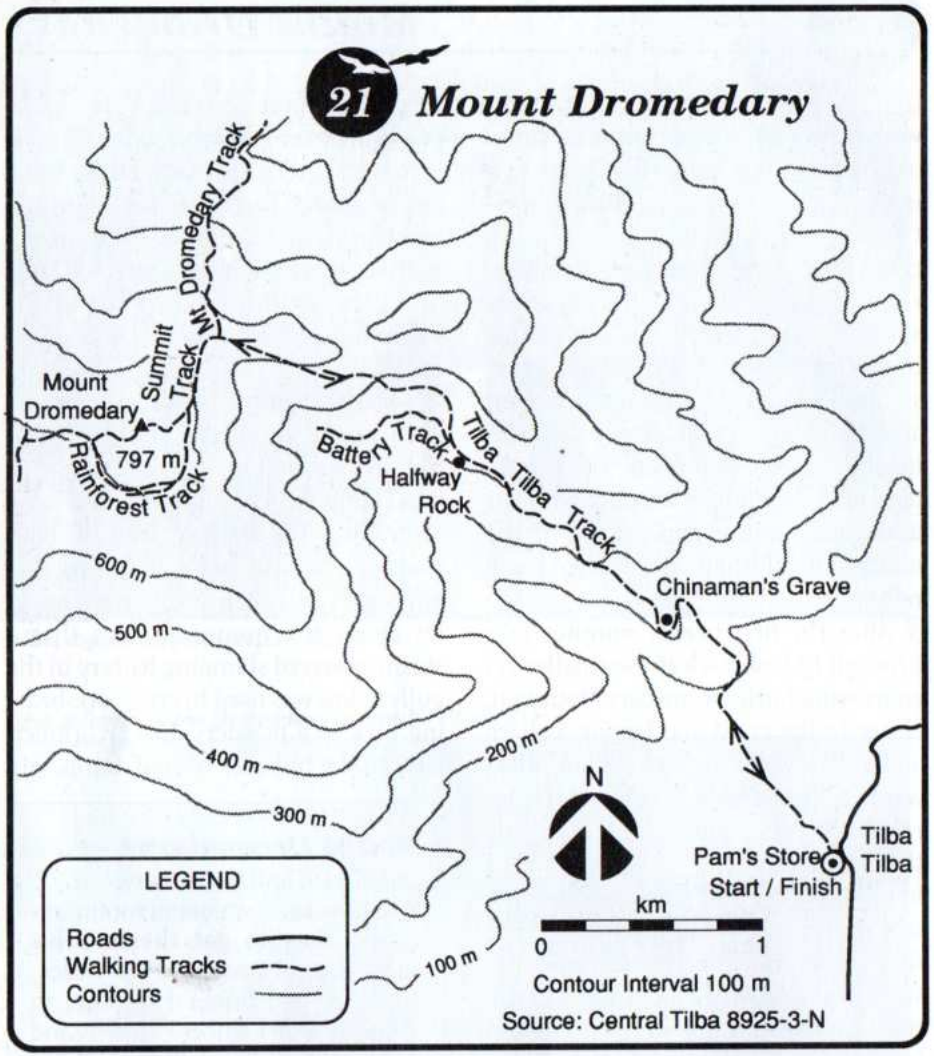
The mountain was a gold-mining centre last century and in the early years of this, and in keeping with Chinese interest in this precious metal, the grave of a Chinaman is reached after 2 km. It is to the right of the track, but in fact a pile of stones here does not mark the exact location of the grave—it is merely in this general vicinity. The track runs along the south-western flank of the mountain and about here it was much cooler.

I had been climbing for an hour and at this point reached a "3 km to summit" notice, followed soon afterwards by a Half Way Rock sign next to a lump of granite. The Battery Trail offshoot leads off the main track near here and although I did not investigate it, a booklet about the mountain says that a steam-powered stamping battery in the gully below was used to crush ore-bearing rock to a powdery dust. Workmen cleared the hillsides of cool, temperate

Mount Dromedary

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Rainforest, mountain views. **How to get there:** Drive south from Narooma Post Office, adjacent to Princes Highway, to Tilba Tilba off Princes Highway and park next to Pam's Store where walk begins. **Total distance from Narooma PO:** 19 km. **Walking distance:** 12 km (return). **Time:** 4 hr 30 min. (return). **Extent of climb:** 770 metres. **Category:** Hard. **Map:** Central Tilba 8925-111-N. **Further information:** NSW Forestry Commission, PO Box 219, Narooma 2546. Ph.: 044 76 2488.



rainforest to fuel the battery and as a result tree ferns, low scrub and eucalypt regrowth are the vegetation cover today. The trail, which had been a bush road, became a foot-track as it pushed through ferns to reach another Forestry Commission sign. I was perplexed by this as it was labelled No. 13 and I had seen only two or three. Apparently the others are on the Battery Trail, described to me as "one of the most interesting features" of the Mount Dromedary walk. I must go there next time.

With some relief, after I had been climbing for almost two hours, another helpful sign informed me that the summit was a kilometre away. Within minutes a log barrier was negotiated and

the track reached a shelter and tables on Dromedary Saddle. To the right, the Mount Dromedary Track, an alternative route on the northern side of the mountain, joined the Tilba Tilba Track. By using the former 4WD vehicles can drive right up to this point which explains barriers on the Tilba Tilba Track.

Mount Dromedary was known to the Aboriginals as Gulaga and this name has been applied to the flora reserve on the mountain. The peak had spiritual significance to the native people and in addition, according to a notice, its forests would have supplied them with food from "animal life, berries and other fruits, and edible roots and tubers."

The track leads off from the saddle to the left and reaches a sign pointing to a shortcut to the summit while the Rainforest Trail heads on in a more circuitous route to the top. I decided to take the shortcut and to my chagrin found it to be an exhausting slog to the trig marking the summit. It had taken me 2 1/4 hours to cover the 5.8 km to this point. The views from the top on this sunny day swept away my exhaustion: forests, mountains, lakes, beaches and the sea could all be seen. To the east is low-lying Montague Island. Far away, directly to the north, I could see Pigeon House mountain, a striking peak which shares nomenclature history with Mount Dromedary, both being named in 1770 by James Cook while he sailed northwards along the NSW south coast in the *Endeavour*.

There is a slightly higher, by nine metres, western summit, reached via a north-west spur and about a kilometre from the trig point. I have not been to this, nor have I seen the grave of an old gold miner, Julius Saunders, who after his death in 1928 was buried in a small clearing south-west of the trig. Saunders had lived there for many years and the clearing is named after him. In the end I was glad I had taken the summit shortcut because I returned via the Rainforest Track and found it more enjoyable to descend through this lovely area rather than climb through it. In the rainforest the overhead canopy blotted out the sun and it was cool and dark as the track spiralled downwards. There were creepers, mosses and lichens and some of the soft tree ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*) were huge. One giant pinkwood (*Eucryphia moorei*) reached for the sky while its bulging roots stretched across the earth. Sassafras (*Doryphora sassafras*) was intriguing—clean limbless trunks crowned by branches and foliage.

On the way down I ignored an Engine Track offshoot to the right although it was only 300 metres return, and half an hour after leaving the summit was back at the shortcut sign. From there I plodded determinedly back to Pam's Store taking almost two hours in total from the summit to do so. A word of warning: beware of leeches on the mountain in rainy weather. They attacked me on an earlier occasion and I only became aware of their hideous presence when blood began seeping through my socks while I was driving to Bermagui.

22 Main Ridge Track

Around sixty hectares of woodland make up a patch of bush on the outskirts of Tathra known as the Tathra Forest Wildlife Reserve. Birdlife is prolific in the forest with more than seventy species having been identified as living in the reserve or sighted visiting it. Of these, four are classified as rare/vulnerable—the glossy-black cockatoo, crested shrike tit, rufous fantail, and White's thrush. Thirteen mammal species and five types of reptiles have also been noted. It is apparent that this reserve, while small, is an important part of a wildlife corridor linking national parks to the north and south of the Tathra area. (A species list can be obtained from the reserve controllers.)

About eighty metres from the start of the Main Ridge Track, a sign points to the Cream Box Track, a link with the Snowy Mountains Highway, 0.5 km away. More of that later. Keep going on Main Ridge to find another trail, Blueberry Ash, darting off to the left. This curving diversion rejoins Main Ridge below the first junction after about thirty minutes and is worth a look. It sidles into a ferny gully, crosses a footbridge spanning a creek, and climbs to pass a wooden seat and then a second one looking out across a thickly timbered ravine. The crack of the eastern whipbird was prominent among numerous bird calls heard around this track. From the second seat, the trail cuts back to the creek before climbing through cool forest and rejoining Main Ridge at a sign pointing back to the carpark.

Main Ridge drops quickly from this point before levelling out in forest in which fallen leaves and needles carpet the track. It falls into a gully of rusty discoloured water (this may not be pollution, but a type of algae associated with iron oxides) and climbs out laboriously to meet a T-junction. Turn left here and walk up to sealed Killarney Rd, heading left again to re-enter bush at the end of the street. The trail runs gently downhill before reaching a patch of open grass. Head directly towards the sea and within five minutes you are at Tathra Beach.

You can either return the way you have come, or walk uphill from the grassy patch, turning right at houses and strolling between them and the bush to a dirt road behind the Tathra school. Turn right here, then left into Noojee St, to reach the Snowy Mountains Highway. Turn right and at the Killarney Rd intersection re-enter the bush, finding the Cream Box Track heading off to the right next to a reserve noticeboard. Signs along this short track identify trees and shrubs. The Main Ridge Track is reached and soon you are back at your vehicle.

The route I have described has no signs between the point where the Blueberry Ash Track rejoins Main Ridge and the start of the Cream Box Track off the highway. Some diversion work is planned at the second (discoloured) creek to make the crossing more accessible and it may be bridged.

Main Ridge Track

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Coastal forest, birdlife. **How to get there:** Drive from Tathra Post Office, Bega St, Tathra, along Snowy Mountains Highway to Thompsons Rd to find carpark on right of this road 0.4 km from junction. **Total distance from Tathra PO:** 3.1 km. **Walking distance:** 5.5 km (return). **Time:** 1 hr 45 min. (return). **Category:** Easy. **Map:** Bega 8824-1-S. **Further information:** Tathra Forest Wildlife Reserve, PO Box 76, Tathra 2550. Ph.: 064 94 1500.

23 Kangarutha Walking Track

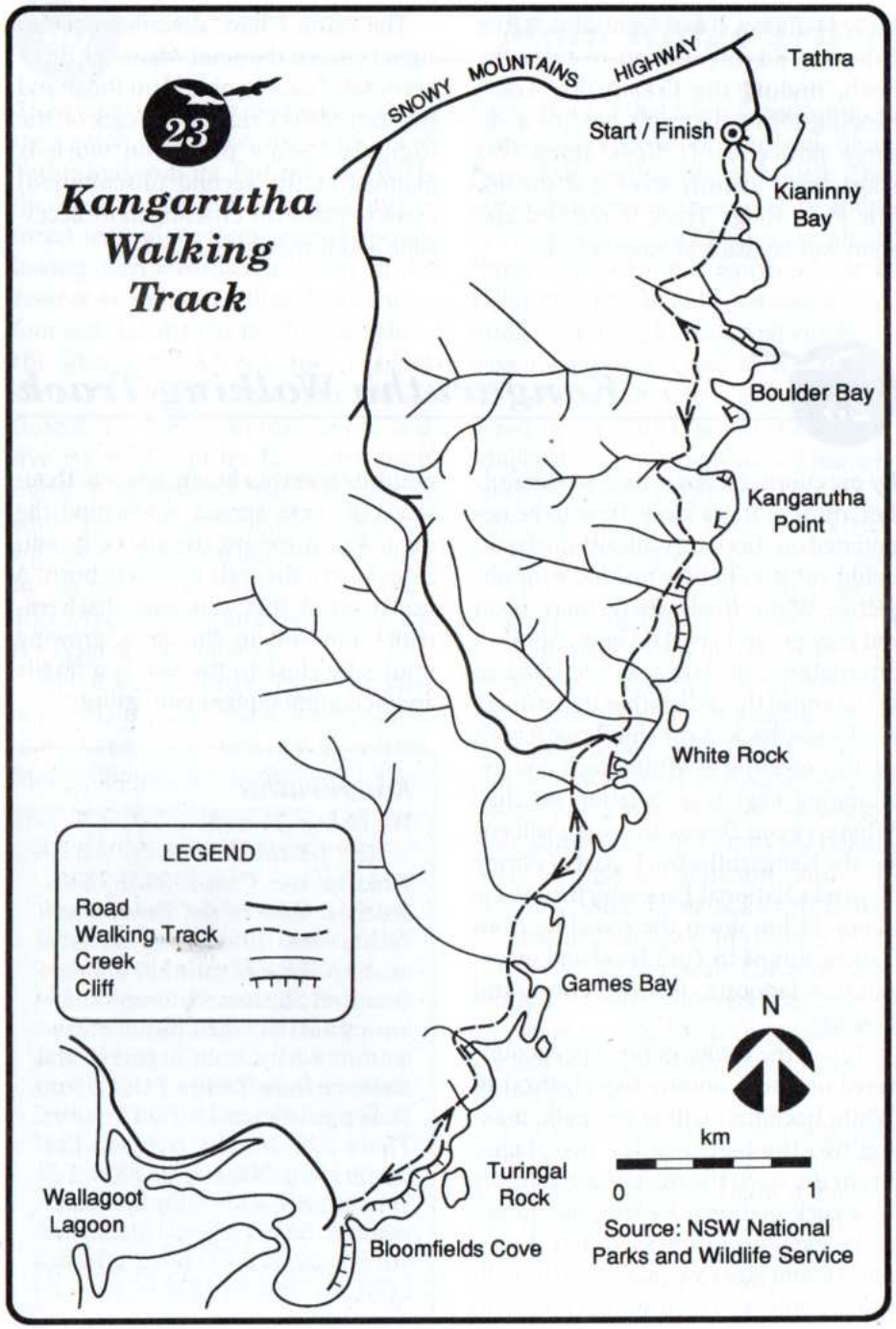
By my count, no fewer than twelve gullies, most of them steep, have to be negotiated on this long walk although you could cut it in half by making your objective White Rock where there is an old clay pit and coastal views. Another alternative is to arrange to be picked up at the end of the walk rather than trudge all the way back. A car shuffle with both parties meeting at White Rock and exchanging keys is a variation on this. Whatever you choose to do you will enjoy the Kangarutha track, part of skinny Bournda National Park which runs for about 14 km down the coastline from Tathra almost to Tura Head and incorporates lagoons, forests, coves and beaches.

Ten of the twelve gullies are encountered on the Kianinny Bay (Tathra) to White Rock first half of the walk, making this the harder of the two stages. From the start, the track climbs steeply to a rock platform looking out to sea and rocks with Tathra to the left. A couple of footbridges are crossed as the path heads south to reach Boulder Bay, an exquisite jewel of a beach, home to thousands of rocks spread out behind the sand. A post toward the end of it indicates where the trail re-enters bush. A leaflet about this walk says that remnant rainforest in this area, growing unusually close to the sea, is a fragile and uncommon plant community.

Kangarutha Walking Track

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Coastal bush, cliffs, beaches. **How to get there:** From Tathra Post Office, Bega St, drive west on Bega St turning left into Davidson St, then Kianinny St, following seal to reach picnic area at bottom where walk begins. **Total distance from Tathra PO:** 1.3 km. **Walking distance:** 18.6 km (return). **Time:** 5 hr 30 min. (return). **Category:** Hard. **Maps:** Bega 8824-1-S, Wolumla 8824-11-N. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, PO Box 23, Tathra 2550. Ph.: 064 94 1209.



The path climbs sharply, then switchbacks its way along the coastline before running down for good views of craggy Kangarutha Point and a rocky island across which the sea pours in rough weather. Another post shows the way to go with the track pushing through a cool and pretty gully.

Carry on along the easily followed track to find that in all it takes about 1 3/4 hours to reach the dirt road leading to the old White Rock clay pit site, first seen from the track as a pure white cliff-face in stark contrast to the green of the surrounding bush. Miners extracted clay from here for the manufacture of house bricks for about twenty years from 1960. To the left of the pit, the sea thrusts through a slim channel in a ceaseless hammering of stone cliffs. There are views of the sea and whitish-grey rocks.

By now you have been walking for just over 5 km. A post about fifty metres up the road from where you joined it indicates where the track resumes. (A leaflet about this walk discussing this part of the trail says that Aboriginal occupation of the coastline traversed by the track lasted several thousand years with a 1982 survey locating shell middens; camp sites and a quarry; to protect them, their exact locations have not been revealed.) Within about fifteen minutes yet another gully takes you down to cross a watercourse heading towards the sea. Soon afterwards the track drops into Games Bay, a small cove of sand and rocks, named after pioneer farmers. The climb out is gentle and the walk becomes an undemanding stroll across a grassy area that may have been dairy paddocks at one time. Rabbits scampered about here when I made the walk in September 1992.

Some forty minutes after starting out on the second leg I could see Turingal Rock, bare apart from a few clumps of vegetation, and beyond it the cliffs of Tura Head. (A point that should be made about the Kangarutha track is that bush and scrub often obscure views of the coastline.) Twenty minutes later, the walk ends at Bloomfields Cove, also known as Wallagoot Gap, a pleasant if unusual beach where the sea forces itself through a narrow passage in rock. Some walkers arrange to be picked up here, others retrace their steps (to walk both ways would occupy about 5 1/2 hours). Pick-up drivers should note that from Tathra Post Office it is about 13.5 km to this point, reached by turning off the Sapphire Coast Dr. at Wallagoot Lake Rd and driving past the Wallagoot Lake Boat Club along a sandy road skirting the stretch of water called Wallagoot Lagoon on maps.

The Kangarutha leaflet mentioned earlier notes that vegetation seen on the trail includes dwarf oak (*Casuarina paludosa*), blue leafed stringybark (*Eucalyptus agglomerata*), woollybutt (*E. longifolia*) and mugga ironbark (*E. sideroxylon*). Rainforest species behind Boulder Bay include Port Jackson fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*), cabbage tree palm (*Livistonia australis*), lillypilly (*Acmena smithii*), and boobialla (*Myoporum acuminatum*). Towards the end of the track in a remnant of uncleared coastal forest are grey box (*E. bosistoana*), woollybutt, red gum (*E. tereticornis*) and stringybark. At several places the track pushes through paperbark (*Melaleuca*).

24 Bournda Lagoon

There used to be a wonderfully crazy bridge of rough-hewn planks held together by wire on the Bournda Lagoon track. When I first walked the trail about 1985 this bridge, over Sandy Beach Creek, dipped alarmingly to the right and the whole contraption swung and groaned as I made the crossing. Alas, it fell victim to floods, just like its predecessor. The authorities, tired of all this, rebuilt it as a low-level wooden crossing, sensible and sound. The downside is that a touch of excitement engendered by the petulant bridge threatening to pitch you into the water no longer tingles the nerves.

Soon after the start of the walk, the track climbs through ghostly, grey-barked trees with the lagoon on your left and the pounding of the sea plain in the ears. What is a short climb takes you to a lookout above the lagoon in which grass-like sedges are prominent. Trees press close around the lagoon and are reflected in its still waters. The path wriggles uphill before plunging past massive rock cliffs and through a patch of rainforest where bulging roots snake across the earth. Closer to the track, the lagoon sedges glow with a pale vibrancy. Waterbirds such as black swans nest in these sedges.

The track passes an outdoor classroom of a Field Studies Centre, then a second one, and arrives at the new bridge, about 2 km from the start. Bits and pieces of the former cantankerous crossing remain. Beyond here, the trail proceeds through slender trunks of casuarina or she-oak stands. There are no intrusive sounds—simply the call of birds. The track climbs through drier country of stringybark, silvertop ash, bloodwood and woollybutt and descends to meet a T-junction. Take the left-hand path and enter a gaunt avenue of kunzea and melaleuca. A sign pointing to North Tura is reached and further on steps lead down to the beach and on to Bournda Island, tiny and insignificant. Large, reddish rocks thrusting through sand around here are 460 million years old, no less. If you stay on the track, find that within minutes it takes you down to the beach where you simply walk northwards for about 0.5 km to a ramp leading back to the start point. Beyond the lagoon, the scrub seen from the beach is so dense it looks as though you could walk on it.

Bournda Lagoon

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Coastal bush, lagoon, birdlife, beaches. **How to get there:** Drive from Tathra Post Office, Bega St, Tathra, left into Sapphire Coast Dr., then to Bournda Rd turnoff. Continue on Bournda Rd for 3 km, turning right to reach carpark where walk begins. **Total distance from Tathra PO:** 16.8 km. **Walking distance:** 5.5 km. **Time:** 1 hr 30 min. **Category:** Easy. **Maps:** Bega 8824-1-S, Wolumla 8824-11-N. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, PO Box 23, Tathra 2550. Ph.: 064 94 1209.

What the White Rock miners left behind (Walk 23)

Checking on crayfish pots (Walk 23)

25 Bournda Beach

Bournda Beach

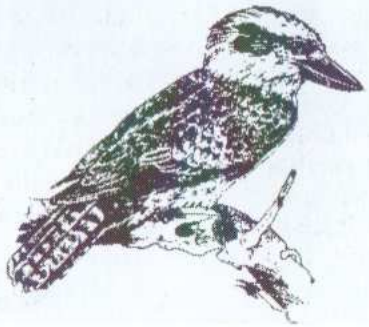
KEY DETAILS

What to see: Coastal bush, beach, lagoon. **How to get there:** Drive from Tathra Post Office, Bega St, Tathra, left into Sapphire Coast Dr., then to Bournda Rd turnoff. Continue on Bournda Rd for 3 km, and park in parking bay adjacent to point where road bends right towards Bournda Lagoon. **Total distance from Tathra PO:** 13.8 km. **Walking distance:** 5 km. **Time:** 1 hr 45 min. **Category:** Easy. **Maps:** Bega 8824-1-S, Wolumla 8824-11-N. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, PO Box 23, Tathra 2550. Ph.: 064 94 1209.

A sign at the start of this walk, just past the turnoff to Bournda Lagoon, describes it as Bournda Lagoon via Bondi Lake, but it can easily be turned into a round trip taking you back to the start point while avoiding all but a minimum of back-tracking. The walk to the lagoon carpark is a relaxing stroll through avenues beyond which kangaroos graze on former cleared land. Birdlife is prolific and one species that I could not even see let alone identify had a captivating bell-like call from high up in old eucalypts.

Once you reach the Bournda Lagoon carpark, amble down to the beach and begin a walk of about 2 km northwards to wooden steps marked by posts. From the top of these, more steps take you down to a track that runs through tightly packed melaleuca to a carpark. Just before this, a trail marked Bournda Lagoon heads off to the left. It wanders through the bush to reach the blue, still waters of Bondi Lake. There is a glimpse of sandhills to the left while opposite them hills and forest fill the background.

The track enters cleared ground and watch out for a sign pointing to Hobart Beach. Follow this and within minutes you are back at your vehicle. Little energy has been expended on a charming walk that provides numerous small pleasures.



26 The Pinnacles

Compressed soft white sand and a cap of red gravelly clay deposited during the Tertiary geological period (up to sixty-five million years ago) have combined to produce this scenic marvel, reached after a short walk through the bush from the carpark. Crevices and holes scar the massive cliff-face which is actively eroding. Further up the Pinnacles gully, forest obscures the craggy outline of the cliffs as they run back from the sea. The feature is called the Quoraburagun Pinnacles on one map although a leaflet about the walk does not refer to this name.

The track makes for a leisurely, circular stroll with the distinctive reddish appearance of the Pinnacles being repeated occasionally along the coastline. At one point an eroding sea cliff has caused a "slump depression" of red soil similar to that of the Pinnacles and leading to speculation that perhaps in time a second Pinnacles will emerge.

By turning right at a junction in the track you reach steps leading down to Long Beach and by walking south along the beach you can enter the Pinnacles gully. The authorities ask that the gully be left alone because the "formations are extremely fragile", but this plea has not prevented the stupid from carving their names and initials on the surfaces while some have climbed over them. Should you go there, just look.

Making this detour adds about 1.3 km to the overall walk which travels through forest and heath, part of the northern section of Ben Boyd National Park. The track leaflet mentions that until the 1950s, the first section of the walk was within a forestry pine plantation and that the pines are regenerating strongly. That splendid bird, the yellow-tailed black cockatoo, is the culprit here through its habit of carrying and dropping cones in and beyond the former plantation boundaries.

Blackbutt, bloodwood, she-oak, tea-tree, banksia and many other vegetation species are listed in the leaflet which also records birds of the area, among them superb blue wrens, New Holland honey eaters, kookaburras and pied currawongs. The flat Lennards Island, described as a "semi-detached headland", can be seen to the south of this short but always stimulating track.

The Pinnacles

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Coloured cliffs, coastal bush. **How to get there:** Drive from Eden Post Office, Imlay St, Eden, north on Princes Highway turning right into Haycock Rd then right into turnoff to carpark. **Total distance from Eden PO:** 10 km. **Walking distance:** 1.5 km. **Time:** 45 min. **Category:** Easy. **Maps:** Pambula 8824-11-S, Eden 8823-1-N. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, rear Twofold Arcade, Imlay St, Eden 2551. Ph.: 064 96 1434.

The new crossing, safe but unadventurous (Walk 24)

Uncompleted wall, Bittangabee ruins (Walk 28)

27 Saltwater Creek – Hegartys Bay

Admirers of coastal wildflowers should derive considerable pleasure from this Ben Boyd National Park walk if it is made in springtime although in October 1992 I was disappointed at seeing so few of the species that had laid such a painted blanket across heathlands when I first made the walk six years earlier. If wildflowers are your scene, then it would be prudent to check first with rangers, otherwise you could be disappointed.

Finding the start of the track at Saltwater Creek can be tricky. At the southern end of the carpark, go down to the beach and walk about 400 metres south to a rocky point where you can cross Woodburn Creek, its passage to the sea barred by sand. Pick your way back along the southern bank of the creek and find a sign about halfway along, partially obscured by foliage. The walk begins here and initially wanders through pleasant bush, the way indicated by clear markers, before breaking out onto gentle heathlands dotted (on my first visit) with clusters of millions of white, cream, mauve and orange wildflowers among the low coastal shrubs.

Marker posts guide walkers across the heath, the track presenting a view of dark-red cliffs against which the sea swirls vainly. After fifteen minutes, the trail re-enters thick bush and funnels its way down to a creek bed of heavy rock. Walk a few metres to the left and find that the track resumes in an obscure fashion until it pushes through a melaleuca tunnel before emerging on a vast expanse of heath. A fresh breeze about here is enjoyable on warm days, the salty smell of the sea mingling with the sweetish scent of flower and shrub. Look northwards for views of the jagged coastline.

About forty minutes after starting out, or 3.5 km, find the track breasts a gentle rise and displays, far in the distance, the white tower of the Green Cape lighthouse and associated buildings best determined with binoculars. A succession of cliffs stretches along the coast towards the light. The track progresses through a bracken-filled gully and once out of here look back and marvel at the stepped ledges of a nearby cliff, so smooth that the hand of man could have fashioned them.

Saltwater Creek – Hegartys Bay

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Coastal heaths, wildflowers, cliffs. **How to get there:** From Eden Post Office, Imlay St, Eden, drive south on Princes Highway, turning left into Edrom Rd, right into Green Cape Rd, left into Duck Hole Forest Rd. After 4.5 km, turn right to reach Saltwater Creek camping area. **Total distance from Eden PO:** 42.5 km. **Walking distance:** 10 km (return). **Time:** 2 hr 30 min. (return). **Category:** Easy. **Map:** Kiah 8823-1-S. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, rear Twofold Arcade, Imlay St, Eden 2551. Ph.: 064 96 1434.

The track continues on to run along the northerly rim of Hegartys Bay, a giant-sized gash in the coast, the prominent reddish cliffs dropping into the sea which washes against a rocky shoreline. Tight coastal vegetation presses towards the ocean. Once down on the rocks it is exhilarating to explore honeycomb-like platforms while watching, at a safe distance, surges that rush through several channels and at odd moments burst upwards in violent rushes of foam and spray.

So quietly undulating is the path that the return to Saltwater Creek can be accomplished in the same time as it took to reach Hegartys Bay, while in the late afternoon the shy presence of grazing kangaroos adds gentle pleasure to the walk. Some walkers will prefer to continue on past Hegartys Bay to Bittangabee, about another 4.5 km distant, but that means an overall return trek approaching 20 km or arranging to have someone at Bittangabee pick you up. I prefer to break this long walk into two as the following chapter explains. Note that if you want to continue on past Hegartys Bay, then identifying where the track resumes in the bush may be frustrating. A route on a track leaflet appears to show that it bypasses the bay, but so far as I could determine the trail goes down onto the rocks. After searching for some minutes on the rocky platforms I eventually sighted a cairn of stones about fifty metres north of a patch of broken boulders towards the southen end of the bay. This was an essential marker because on re-entering the bush at this point I found the track a few metres to the left of the cairn. Regular users of the path will know all about this, of course, but first-timers are at a disadvantage. A more prominent marker is justified.

28 Bittangabee – Hegartys Bay

Within five minutes of the start of this walk, the track passes stone ruins of a building, possibly of seven rooms, dating back to the mid 1840s. A viewing platform allows the ruins to be studied without the need to go among the surviving walls, about a metre high, and piles of rocks presumably intended for use in the structure or once part of the building itself. The outlines of several rooms can be seen. A noticeboard at the site records that the visiting "Aboriginal Protector", George Augustus Robinson, observed here in the mid 1840s "the beginnings of a stone house set among bark huts, fruit trees and gardens". The notice speculates that the house, which was never completed, may have been intended as a residence for one of the three pioneering Imlay brothers who had extensive whaling and pastoral interests. Their fortunes declined and two of the brothers died in 1847, one shooting himself. The third migrated to New Zealand.

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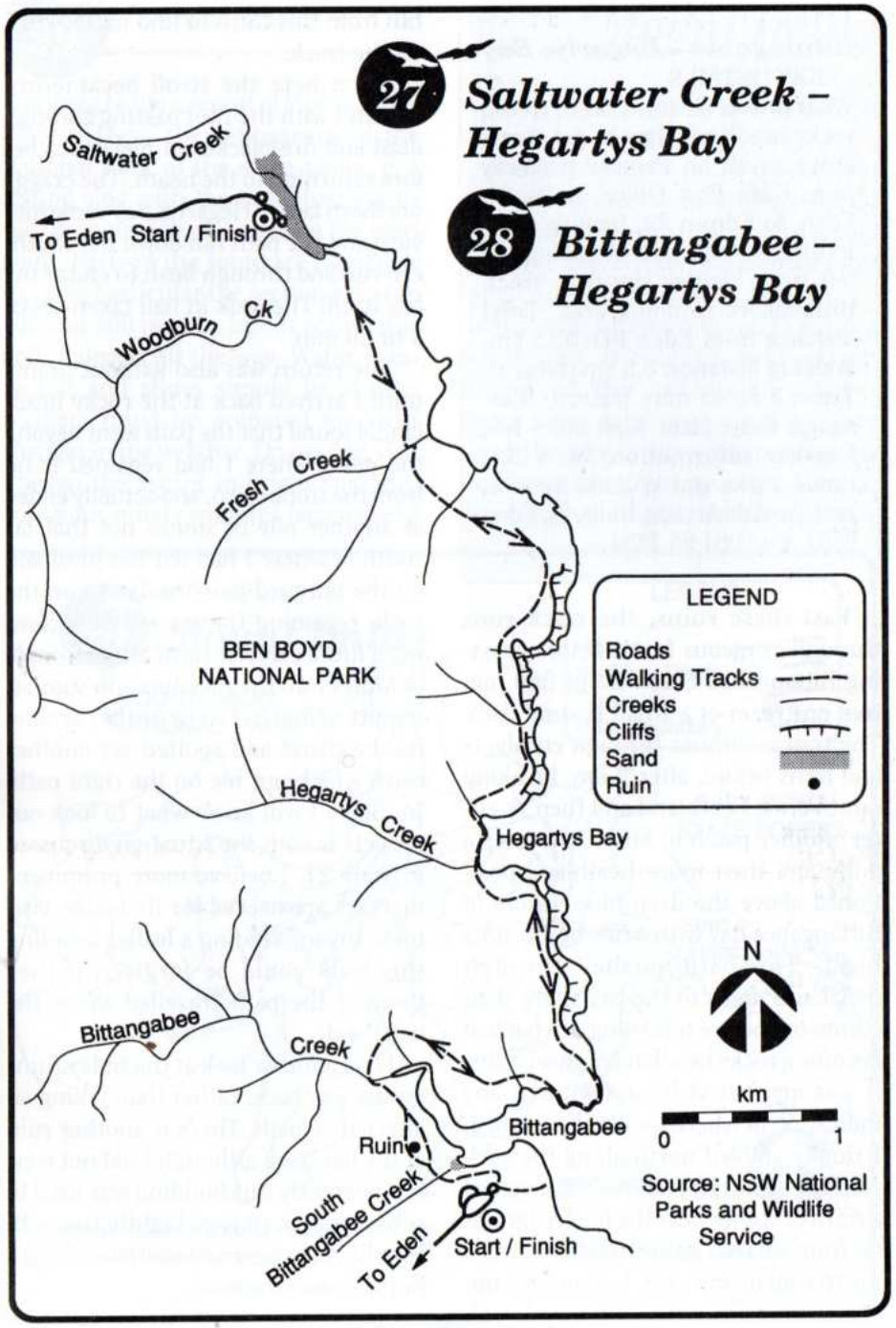


Bittangabee – Hegartys Bay
KEY DETAILS
What to see: Historic ruins, forest, rocky headland. **How to get there:** Drive south on Princes Highway from Eden Post Office, Imlay St, Eden, to Edrom Rd, turning right into Green Cape Rd and making two left turns (follow signs) to reach Bittangabee camping area. **Total distance from Eden PO:** 43.5 km. **Walking distance:** 8.5 km (return). **Time:** 2 hr 45 min. (return). **Category:** Easy. **Map:** Kiah 8823-1-S. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, rear Twofold Arcade, Imlay St, Eden 2551. Ph.: 064 96 1434.

Past these ruins, the track runs through gorgeous forest before crossing Bittangabee Creek about fifty metres upstream of a small natural dam. The trail continues through eucalypts and ferns before, after 2 km, breaking out to cross heathland and then re-enter another patch of bush. It crosses a gully and then more heathland positioned above the deep blue waters of Bittangabee Bay with a tiny beach at its head. The path pushes through melaleuca down to the bay shore then climbs out before returning to what had become a rocky headland of sheer cliffs. It was my first visit, and without any indication of where the track resumed, I simply ambled north along the rock platforms until I fortuitously discovered a cairn of stones near the bush edge not far from where a gap would have forced me to stop in any case. I scrambled uphill from this cairn to find myself back on the track.

From here the stroll became uneventful with the trail passing through dead and fire-blackened melaleuca before returning to the heath. The craggy northern face of Hegartys Bay came into view and the path ran down the southern rim and through bush to end at the bay itself. The walk in had taken about 1 hr 20 min.

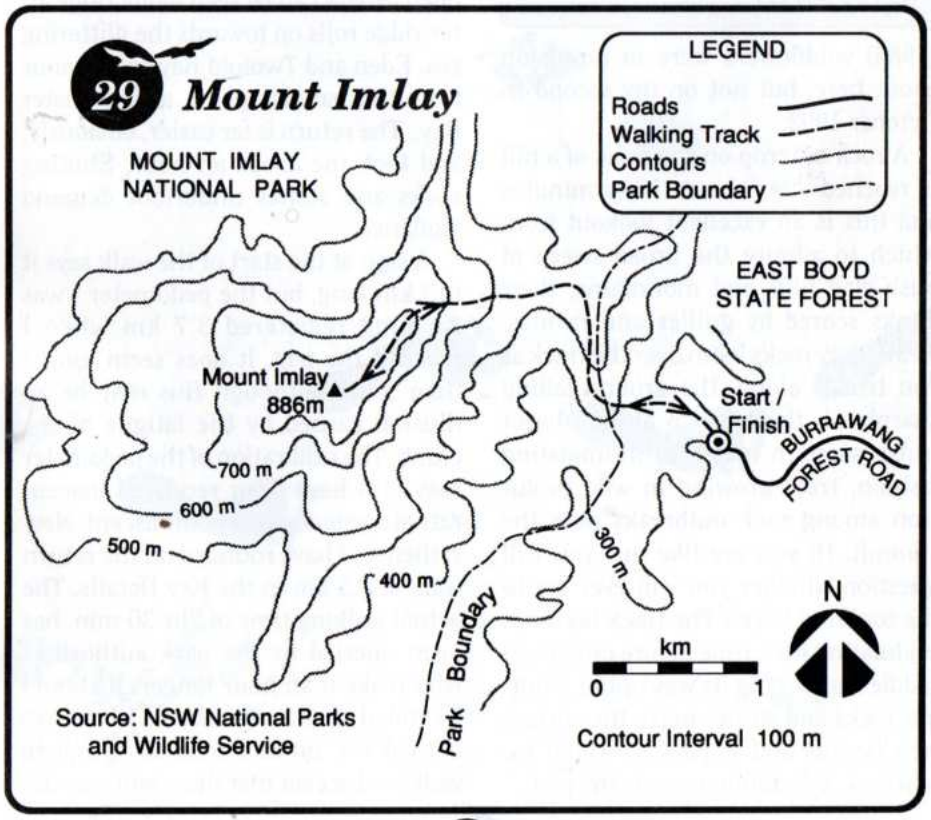
The return was also without drama until I arrived back at the rocky headland. I found that the path went beyond the point where I had regained it up from the stone cairn, and actually ended at another pile of stones not that far south of where I had left the headland on the outward journey. Down on the rock, regaining the track was becoming a futile exercise until after a couple of forays into the melalueca in vain attempts to find it, I went further around the headland and spotted yet another cairn which put me on the right path. In future I will know what to look out for yet, as with the situation discussed in Walk 27, I believe more prominent markers are needed for first-time visitors. Anyone reading a leaflet detailing this walk could be forgiven if they thought the path travelled above the headland.

I had another look at the Imlay ruins on the way back, rather than taking an alternative path. There is another ruin at the bay itself although I did not view it. Apparently this building was used to service the Green Cape Lighthouse, with supplies being carried overland along a horse-drawn tramway.

29 Mount Imlay

Climbing to the summit of Mount Imlay (886 metres), the centrepiece of the National Park of the same name, is a testing slog with the track hauling itself up about 600 metres from the start point. Parts of the route are extremely steep, in particular the section between 600 and 800 metres, but in reality it is uphill almost all the way. Water is essential and shoes should be sturdy. Walkers must be prepared for swift changes in the weather. On my first visit I began the ascent in bright sunlight, but about ninety minutes later when I reached the top cloud was closing in fast.

The climb begins immediately from the start with the track pushing through stately forest in which blackened giants show that fire has been through the foothills. The trail is easily followed, although after fifteen minutes, in passing across rock, it becomes indistinct on the ground. This is of little concern because silver markers pinned to trees show the way to go. As you progress, fronds of black boys, or grass trees, droop over the track. On my first visit



Mount Imlay

KEY DETAILS

What to see: Extensive views of mountains, forests, coastline. **How to get there:** Drive south on Princes Highway from Eden Post Office, Imlay St, Eden, turning right at Burrawang Forest Rd to reach picnic area. **Total distance from Eden PO:** 30.5 km. **Walking distance:** 7.5 km (return). **Time:** 2 hr 30 min. (return). **Extent of climb:** 600 metres. **Category:** Hard. **Map:** Mount Imlay 8823-4-S. **Further information:** NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, rear Twofold Arcade, Imlay St, Eden 2551. Ph.: 064 96 1434.

(1986) wildflowers were in profusion about here, but not on my second in October 1992.

A rock outcrop on the flank of a hill is reached after about thirty minutes and this is an excellent lookout from which to admire the broad sweep of bush-clad hills and mountains, their flanks scored by gullies and ravines. Heavy grey rocks loom over the track as you trudge along, the ground falling sharply on the left. Up ahead Mount Imlay soars in majestic, intimidating fashion, trees growing in wild profusion among rock outbreaks near the summit. (If you are like me, you will question whether you will ever get to the top from here.) The track becomes undulating for a time before crossing a saddle and forcing its way uphill. Shifting rocks and stones make the surface treacherous and it pays to watch for markers. Vegetation crowds the path.

After climbing for about an hour, I became aware that up ahead immense boulders were rearing out of the bush, for all the world like castle battlements of medieval times. The scramble up to the battlements and through this rock barrier (to the right) was taxing and demanded care. Once it has been breached, find that for about 800 metres in distance the trail continues to rise up to the trig point along what becomes a narrow ridge, although this last stage is not as exhausting as some of those that preceded it. From the summit, mountains, hills and slopes swirl around, dense with bush if occasionally pock-marked by clear-felling. Green, open valleys can be seen while ridge after ridge rolls on towards the glittering sea. Eden and Twofold Bay are obvious from this vantage point, as is Disaster Bay. The return is far easier, obviously, and took me about an hour. Shifting rocks and stones underfoot demand vigilance.

A sign at the start of the walk says it is 3 km long, but the pedometer I was carrying registered 3.7 km when I reached the trig. It does seem longer than 3 km, although this may be an illusion caused by the fatigue of the climb. The calibration of the pedometer may also have been rendered inaccurate at various stages of the ascent. Nevertheless, I have rounded off the return walk at 7.5 km in the Key Details. The actual walking time of 2hr 30 min. has been queried by the park authorities who make it an hour longer. It should be noted that in this book I have recorded the times I took to complete walks— I accept that these will vary de-

pending on a person's fitness and interest in what a track presents.

Vegetation in the 3808-hectare Mount Imlay National Park includes silver-topped ash and stringybark in drier areas and monkey gum, broad-leaved messmate and peppermint on better soils. A leaflet records that the park contains a newly discovered eucalyptus species, *E. imlayensis*, and a waxflower, *Eriostemon vigatus*, previously found only in Tasmania and in Victoria (at one site). Mammals include grey kangaroos, red-necked and swamp wallabies, and wombats. Among the birds are tree creepers, currawongs and lyrebirds. Wedge-tailed eagles are seen occasionally.

As this book was going to press, newspapers reported a proposal to place what was described as a "sea-phone aerial" on top of Mount Imlay. A National Parks and Wildlife Service spokesman was quoted as saying that this was the eighth application for an "aerial tower" on the mountain. "Mount Imlay, one of the finest features of the South Coast, will end up looking like a porcupine," he said.

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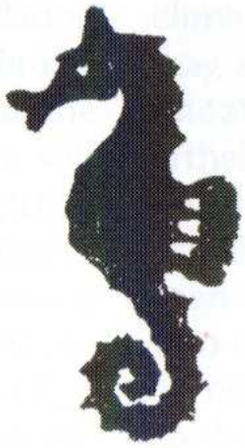

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